

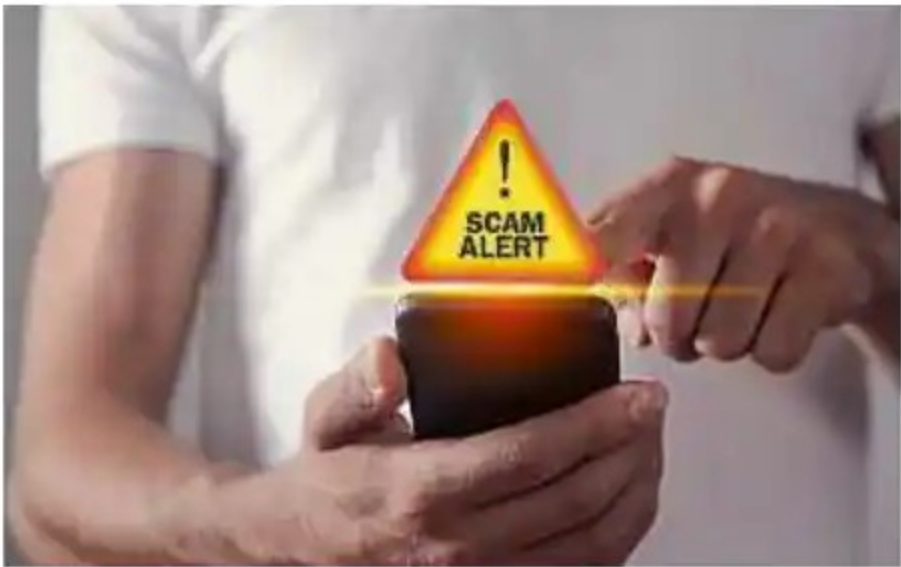
House hunters trapped in new Telegram rental fraud

Rise in online rental scams as fraudsters target users on encrypted platform

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

Cybercriminals are exploiting the Telegram messenger application to cheat people through house rental scams by advertising fake listings, officials said. The scam came to light after a complainant filed an FIR with East Cybercrime Police on

December 19, alleging he was cheated of Rs 6.25 lakh while house-hunting. The 27-year-old victim from Nagawara told police he was part of a group called 'Rent House' on Telegram, where flats for rent were advertised. "Multiple people contacted me through Telegram, claiming to be owners or rental agents. They demand-



ed advances such as booking charges, security deposits, and processing fees. Trusting them, I transferred money multiple times through Google Pay, PhonePe, and bank transfers," the complainant alleged. "After receiving the money, the suspects stopped responding and blocked me on Telegram and on the phone. I

Anonymity loophole

A senior officer explained that Telegram provides cybercriminals anonymity, allowing them to advertise fake listings on multiple groups. "Due to its anonymity and lack of robust content moderation, Telegram is

exploited by cybercriminals. "Since groups must be reported manually for removal, scamsters close old groups once the con is complete and open new ones to find more victims," the officer said.

later realised the rental listings were fake and that I had been cheated by an organised group involved in online rental fraud," the complainant said, adding

that he had transferred the money between November 14 and December 12. Cybercrime investigators said scamsters create a sense

of urgency to lure victims.

Sense of urgency

"They use various excuses. Cybercriminals will tell the victim that a potential tenant is about to finalise the property, and if they do not book it in the next few minutes, they will miss the deal," a senior Bengaluru police officer said. "They will also tell the victim the owner is away or incapacitated to dissuade a physical visit. Renters sometimes pay booking and processing fees early, even before visiting, to secure the deal. The scamsters are exploiting this," he added.

NY outing costs bizman valuables worth Rs 1.37 cr

BENGALURU, DHNS: A New Year's outing proved costly for a city-based businessman after gold jewellery and luxury watches worth Rs 1.37 crore were allegedly stolen from his house in Sadashivanagar while the family was away celebrating.

A senior police officer said the complainant, who is in the hotel business, alleged that he locked his house and left with his family early on December 30 to go to Coimbatore to celebrate New Year. The house keys were reportedly left with a woman who had earlier worked as a domestic help and had recently rejoined duty.

Before leaving the city, he dropped the woman, identified as Hajeera Begam, at his in-laws' house and asked her to hand over the key to them.

After some time, he called his in-laws to confirm about the key. He was informed that Hajeera had not handed over the key. He then tried to reach her over phone, but it remained switched off. He also called her husband Shahr, who did not respond.

Suspecting something was wrong, he asked his relative to check the house using a spare key. The theft then came to light, and he filed a case with the Sadashivanagar police.

Police conducted a spot mahazar and found cupboards and drawers broken open. Verification revealed that 979 grams of gold jewellery worth Rs 1.27 crore and seven high-end wristwatches worth Rs 10 lakh were missing.

A police officer said Hajeera had been working at the house since 2022, quit in 2024, and rejoined three days before the theft. A case has been registered, and efforts are on to trace the accused couple.

BTP books 4,651 drunk driving cases in year-end crackdown

501 cases registered during NYE alone

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) conducted a high-intensity special drive against drunk driving across the city.

From December 22 to the early hours of January 1, 3,30,106 vehicles were stopped for inspection.

The 10-day enforcement blitz resulted in 4,651 cases booked for driving under the influence.

On the final night of the year, between December 31 and the morning of January 1, authorities flagged 501 cases as revelers took to the streets to ring in the New Year.

Zonal breakdown

East division emerged as the most active hub for enforcement, recording 9,216 vehicle checks and the highest number of cases at 147. This is largely due to the concentration of nightlife hubs like Koramangala and Indiranagar, where BTP



deploys over 10 checkpoints to manage the high volume of pub-goers.

South division recorded the lowest figures, with 3,727 checks and 65 cases. This division, which includes residential areas like Jayanagar and JP Nagar, traditionally sees more private family gatherings and lower nightlife traffic compared to the east.

Senior officials insisted that the drive was less about collecting fines and more about saving lives.

Joint Commissioner of Police Karthik Reddy noted that while the New Year's Eve tally was high, it stands second to a recent peak of 510 cases.

BTP has indicated that these naka bandis will not end with the holiday season. The department plans to introduce stricter penalties and community education programmes to permanently curb drunk driving across the city.

Drunk driver ploughs SUV into crowd at mall; four injured

BENGALURU, DHNS: A New Year's Eve celebration turned into a nightmare for pedestrians when a speeding SUV, allegedly driven by a drunk man, ploughed through a crowd near the Mall of Asia in Byatarayanapura late Wednesday night.

Four people sustained serious injuries.

The accident occurred at 10.20 pm near Gate No 3, the back gate of the mall.

Sanjay Nagar Traffic Police said the accused, 48-year-old Sunil Kumar Singh B, a resident of Doddabommasandra, was driving a Mahindra XUV 700 (KA-05-NP-3609). Singh, reportedly a legal practitioner, was exiting the mall premises when he lost control of the vehicle.

Eyewitnesses and police said the vehicle was being driven at high speed and in a reckless manner. The SUV first rammed into an iron barricade installed on the footpath by the mall management before ploughing into pedestrians on



CCTV footage shows the SUV hit an iron barricade on the footpath before ploughing into pedestrians.

the road and pavement.

The victims have been identified as Akkamma, 30, Chandrashekhar, 36, Rajalakshmi, 53, and Prajwal Shashidhar Chavaadi, 27. All four were rushed to a nearby hospital with help from the public for emergency treatment.

"The driver was under the influence of alcohol and was driving extremely fast despite the heavy New Year's Eve crowds," a police officer said.

Sanjay Nagar Traffic Police have registered a case against Singh.

Failure to safeguard

In a notable move, police have also named the mall's security in-charge as an accused.

The FIR stated that the mall management failed to implement adequate safety measures for the public within and around the premises during the high-footfall event. Further investigation is on.

BDA seeks IISc audit of road works at Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has sought an independent, third-party quality audit of the asphalt works carried out at the Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout (NPKL) following concerns raised on social media over road quality at several locations.

In a letter dated December 23, 2025, addressed to the Director of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), the BDA requested the institute to depute a competent technical team to conduct a comprehensive quality audit of the completed asphalt works



across the layout.

The authority stated that road asphalt works have been undertaken in all blocks of NPKL and that a majority of

the stretches have been completed. However, senior BDA officials decided to order an independent audit after multiple social media posts flagged issues such as undulated roads, improperly placed transformers, and poor workmanship.

As part of the audit, BDA engineers will facilitate inspections, while the IISc team will be free to carry out all necessary field tests and sampling. The cost of the audit will be borne by the BDA.

According to the letter, the tentative timeline for conducting the quality audit is the first week of January.

Speeding bike hits temple wall; rider killed on the spot

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 24-year-old youth was killed on the spot after his motorcycle crashed into a temple compound wall near Cunningham Road early Thursday.

The incident occurred behind the High Grounds police station around 2.30 am.

The deceased, Sharath Kumar, was a resident of Vyalikaval. His friend Pranam, who was riding pillion, escaped with minor injuries.

High Grounds traffic police said that Kumar left home around 2 am on his Royal Enfield bike. While navigating the stretch near Ramaswamy temple, he reportedly lost control of the speeding vehicle and crashed into the

footpath before hitting the temple wall.

Helmetless ride

"It appears to be a case of self-accident caused by negligent and rash driving. Both the rider and pillion were not wearing helmets at the time of the crash," a senior police officer said.

The impact of the collision was so severe that Kumar sustained fatal head injuries and died on the spot. Pranam was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he is being treated for minor wounds and is said to be out of danger.

High Grounds traffic police have registered a case of accidental death due to negligent driving.

DyCM inaugurates new Hebbal flyover loop

BENGALURU, DHNS: Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday formally inaugurated the new loop of the Hebbal flyover.



The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) had opened the stretch for a trial run on December 20. *DH* had reported last week that the new loop reduced congestion by nearly 25%.

The additional loop has eased traffic for commuters travelling from northern parts of the city, including Yelahanka, Jakkur and Sahakarnagar, towards Mekhri Circle, and has also benefited passengers returning from the airport.

"The new loop will ensure smoother city entry from Yelahanka, Jakkur and Sahakarnagar, improving traffic flow and commuter convenience along this busy corridor. This development marks an important step towards easing congestion and strengthening efficient urban mobility in North Bengaluru," Shivakumar said.

He added that the BDA's proposed short tunnel at Hebbal Junction and a rotary flyover at Mekhri Circle are expected to further ease congestion in the area.

FLORAL FRAME



A stone pot sculpture stands amid blooming pink Tabebuia rosea trees and lush greenery at KH Circle in Bengaluru. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

GBA's East Corporation gives PGs seven-day deadline to comply with safety norms

BENGALURU, DHNS: The East Corporation of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has issued a seven-day deadline to all paying guest (PG) accommodations, hostels and service apartments in the city to review, rectify and ensure compliance with prescribed safety protocols.

The directive follows a recent tragedy in Kundanahalli, where an LPG cylinder blast resulted in loss of life and injuries.

The authority has made it mandatory for establishments to ensure the safe and authorised use of LPG connections, prohibit illegal or unsafe gas cylinders, and comply with ventilation and fire safety norms.

It has also directed PGs and similar facilities to maintain

functional fire extinguishers, emergency exits, and ensure electrical safety, including avoiding overloading.

In addition, the GBA has emphasised the need for valid and subsisting trade licences and registrations.

In its order, the GBA said that inspections will be carried out after the seven-day period. Special inspection drives will be conducted by public health officers, and establishments found violating safety norms may face closure or sealing of the premises.

In serious cases, the authority said it would initiate cancellation of trade licences, impose penalties under the Greater Bengaluru Authority Act, 2024, and launch prosecution where violations pose a threat to life and safety.

16-yr-old girl dies by suicide; cites lack of parental love

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 16-year-old girl allegedly died by suicide at her house on Wednesday night.

Police said she left behind a death note, expressing loneliness and the absence of parental affection.

The girl, a resident of Itamadu, had stopped her education after the Class 10 examination and had been staying at home.

A senior police officer said the girl was found hanging. Her mother, Parvathy, who works as a daily wage, rushed

her to a nearby hospital where she was declared brought dead.

Her parents were living separately due to constant family disputes. While her father resided elsewhere, the girl stayed with her mother.

In her death note, she wrote that she did not receive love from her parents, felt lonely, and held herself responsible for her death.

A case of unnatural death has been registered at the CK Achukattu police station, and further investigation is on.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL
Karnataka Sahitya Academy: Three-day conference on 'Dalit Literature and Movement-50'; LN Mukundaraj, H Govindaiah, SM Jayakara, KT Shantala, M Sunita, Kotiganehalli Ramaiah, Chandrakant Karigar and others; sessions on history of Dalit literature, 'Boosa' movement and other important developments; Venkatagiri Hall, Bangalore University, Jnanabharati; 10.30 am.

by Hulagappa Kattimani; Ravindra Kalakshetra, JC Road; 6.30 pm.

Karnataka Shilpakala Academy and Horticulture Department: Second national wood carving workshop; AN Yellapareddy, R Girish, Pa Sa Kumar, and others; Lalbagh; 11 am.

RELIGIOUS
Jagadguru Vishvaradhyha Janakalyana Pratishthana: Ishtalinga mahapuja; Jagajyoti Basaveshwara Sujnana Mantapa, Vijayanagar; 6 pm.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST
Mist

TEMPERATURES
Maximum 27.0°C
Minimum 19.0°C

Rainfall --
Humidity 88%
Sunset (Jan 2) 6:04 pm
Sunrise (Jan 3) 6:41 am
Moonrise 4:30 am
Moonset 4:30 am
(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

BDA finalises 45-acre plot near Challaghatta metro for skydeck

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has finalised the location for its skydeck project, which will feature the city's tallest tower.

The authority has identified a 46-acre parcel of land at the Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout, located close to the Major Arterial Road (MAR).

Sources said proximity to the Challaghatta metro station was a key factor in finalising the site.

"Another advantage is

that the location is close to the Challaghatta metro station, which improves overall accessibility," a senior BDA official said.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar inspected the proposed site on Thursday.

Earlier, the government had examined over 10 locations for feasibility, including a site near NICE Road. However, the proposal was dropped due to land acquisition issues.

Shivakumar said objections raised by NICE Road

authorities stalled the plan.

"We had decided to acquire some KIADB land that was with NICE, but they objected. They think they are bigger than the government. I know how to teach them a lesson. Now, we have finalised BDA land and will proceed with the project," he said.

The proposed 250-metre-tall skydeck is expected to offer a panoramic view of the city and emerge as a major tourist attraction.

The project is estimated to cost around Rs 500 crore.



DK SHIVAKUMAR
Deputy Chief Minister



We had decided to acquire some KIADB land that was with NICE, but they objected. They think they are bigger than the government. I know how to teach them a lesson. Now, we have finalised BDA land and will proceed with the project.

SSLC preparatory exams from January 5

BENGALURU DHNS: The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) has released the timetable for SSLC preparatory exams. Accordingly, the examinations will be conducted from January 5 to January 10.

In a detailed instructions, the Board has said that question paper will be sent to official emails of the school head masters and they can be accessed with a One Time Password. The HMs will be held responsible for any question paper leak. “Anyone taking photograph of the question paper, uploading it on any social media platform or indulging in any kind of malpractice will face action as per the Karnataka Education Act (Amendment) 2017, reads the instruction.

Meanwhile the Board has directed the schools to evaluate the answer scripts on next day of the exam and upload the performance of students on the Students Achievement Tracking System (SATS).

Wood sculpting camp at Lalbagh from today

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Department of Horticulture, in association with the Karnataka Shilpakala Academy, will conduct the second National Wood Sculpting Camp, from January 2 to 17 at Lalbagh.

As many as 50 expert sculptors from various districts of Karnataka and other states, including Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, will take part in the camp.

The sculptures created during the event will be added to Lalbagh's open-air Wood Museum, established in 2018 to display wooden artworks crafted from trees that have fallen in the garden due to natural causes.

Only 28k of 4.47L who cleared TET got jobs in last 10 years

Govt had promised to fill 10k teachers posts every year

BENGALURU, DHNS

The employment rate among those who cleared Karnataka Teacher Eligibility Test (KARTET) in the state has not even crossed 7% in the last 10 years, with only 28,000 able to get jobs as against the 4.47 lakh qualified.

The Department of School Education and Literacy has the highest number of vacancies at 79,694 posts. However, the state government has not taken necessary measures for recruitment, leading to unemployment among those cleared the TET.

According to teachers who are working, if the government is not willing to fill the vacancies, then it should at least freeze the TET for a few years.

“If you look at those who cleared the TET this year, it is a record number and everyone appears for the TET assuming that the recruitment will happen,” said a senior teacher working with a government school in Bengaluru.

Karnataka has made the TET mandatory since 2014-15 to ensure quality teaching at government schools. But since then only 28,277 posts have been filled, despite the

Teachers recruitment in last 10 yrs			
Year	FILLED POSTS AT		
	Primary	Higher primary	High School
2015	1,929	5,976	1,637
2018		3,389	
2020		1,994	
2023		13,352	

vacancies being available.

The data available from the department shows that between 2014-15 and 2025, a total of 1,38,856 candidates cleared the TET Paper-1 and got eligibility to teach at primary level from classes 1 to 5. This number is 3,08,395 in paper 2, who are eligible to teach classes 6 to 8.

“Vacancies are not just against the sanctioned posts. In this department thousands of vacancies are being created because of voluntary retirement, death and retirement. It should be the priority of a responsible government to fill the posts,”

opined a retired bureaucrat who served as commissioner for School Education.

It can be recalled that the government had earlier promised to fill 10,000 teachers posts every year. But is running the show by hiring 51,000 guest teachers.

The issue was even raised in the recently concluded winter session of the state legislature and School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa assured that the recruitment will be processed soon and also informed that it was on hold because of the in-

ternal reservation issue.

The candidates who have cleared TET and are waiting for recruitment opined that TET has become an additional burden. “For the last 11 years, the state has made TET mandatory. But, before that one should acquire a degree and B.Ed. When B.Ed itself is a course to train teachers in classroom teaching, what was the need for TET?” questions a candidate who cleared TET three years ago.

Meanwhile, the TET eligible candidates even worried about age. “We feel that by the time the government resumes recruitment, age will be barred for many of us,” said another aspirant.

Talking about recruitment at private schools, the candidates said a majority of private schools prefer candidates with masters and B.Ed and not the TET.

Use Aadhaar QR Code Scanner app to verify details, cops told

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka police have been directed to effectively use the Aadhaar QR Code Scanner app, available on both Android and iOS platforms, for offline verification of Aadhaar identity details.

An order regarding the same was issued by Siri Gowri, Superintendent of Police (SP), State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB), on December 30. The order was marked to all City Police Commissioners of Karnataka and all District SPs, including KGF, ANF (Anti Naxal Force) and Karnataka Railways.

“In the 16th UIDIC (Unique Identification Implementation Committee) meeting held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary

mentioned in reference (3), it was instructed to direct concerned parties to use the ‘Aadhaar QR Code Scanner’ mobile application to increase transparency and security in Aadhaar identity verification processes and for offline Aadhaar verification,” the order said.

“In the letter under reference (4), a request was previously made to create more awareness about the ‘Aadhaar QR Code Scanner’ mobile application developed by the Unique Identification Authority of India for offline Aadhaar verification. Therefore, it is once again requested through this letter to provide instructions to all officers/personnel working in your unit to use the ‘Aadhaar QR Code Scanner’ application effectively.”

ED freezes Rs 192 cr after raids on gaming platform's accounting firm

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday said that it has frozen around Rs 192 crore following raids on the office of the accounting firm of gaming platform WinZO.

The Central agency said that the searches were conducted under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, by the Bengaluru Zonal office on December 30. M/s WinZO Pvt Ltd is into the business of online real money gaming services through its app – WinZO, the ED said.

“During the search, Proceeds of Crime (POC) possessed by M/s ZO Games Pvt Ltd, (fully owned Indian subsidiary of M/s. WinZO Pvt Ltd), worth around Rs 192 crores,

has been frozen in the form of bank balances, FDRs, and mutual funds under section 17 (1A) of the PMLA, 2002,” it said in a statement.

“Earlier, ED has conducted search and seizure operations at the office premises of M/s WinZO Pvt Ltd, and the residential premises of its director on Nov 18, 2025. The evidence unearthed during the search and subsequent investigation revealed that the company was engaged in criminal activities and unscrupulous practices i.e. customers were made to play with BOTs/AI/Algorithms/software (termed as PPP/EP/Persona) without being made aware of the fact that they are playing with BOTs/AI/Algorithms and not with humans in real money

games. It has also prevented/limited withdrawals of monies held by the customers in the wallets of M/s WinZO Pvt Ltd,” the added.

The Central probe agency also claimed that M/S WinZO Pvt Ltd generated POC in the form of ‘Rake Commission’ from the matches played by the BOTs with the real players on their Winzo App. In this manner, the company has made winnings of around Rs 177 crore from the BOTs, for the period May 2024 to August 2025 and Rs 557 crore (approx), for the period April 2022 to December 2023.

Further, a part of the POC has been taken out of India to the USA and Singapore under the garb of overseas investments, it said.

Kogilu rehab plan: BJP warns of protest

BENGALURU, DHNS: Yelahanka BJP MLA S R Vishwanath said on Thursday that the saffron party would stage a protest against the government's decision to rehabilitate people whose houses were demolished in Kogilu Layout.

Speaking after the first meeting of the fact-finding committee formed to look into the issue, Vishwanath — a member of the committee — pointed out that they would also conduct a field visit. Explaining that a 14-floor building had been constructed in Baiyappanahalli (where the affected are set to be rehabilitated), Vishwanath added that 50% of the houses had been allotted online.

Probe possible quarry blasting link to leopard death: Minister

BENGALURU, DHNS

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre has directed officials to probe the death of a leopard amid allegations that the big cat died after being injured by rock blasting at a quarry located within a forest area.

The incident came to light

after forest frontline staff found the carcass at Soolivaravillage in the Kaggalipura range. Suspicions that the pregnant leopard, carrying three cubs, may have been killed by a rock blasted from a nearby quarry have raised concerns over inadequate monitoring of such activities in the area.

Yeshwantpur MLA D T Somashekhar has alleged that illegal stone mining is taking place inside forest land.

Calling the allegations serious, Minister Khandre directed officials to investigate any illegal quarrying and take action against those responsible for the leopard's death.



Sign of quality presents



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How to work towards achieving your resolutions

Experts share tips on setting realistic targets and staying consistent

TINI SARA ANIEN
TEAM METROLIFE

Getting fitter, travelling more, changing careers, buying a home or car, and breaking unhealthy patterns remain the most common New Year resolutions this year, behavioural experts say. They explain how one can approach their goals realistically, and why some fail.

Start small
Tasneem Nakhoda, a behavioural therapist, says many people enter January

with checklist-style ambitions and unrealistic timelines. “Large targets, such as losing 10 kg or learning a new language, feel overwhelming and stop people from starting,” she says, stressing the need to break goals into smaller steps.

Spending 10 to 15 minutes a day and linking new habits to existing routines, such as doing a task before lunch or after brushing one's teeth, can help build momentum. “Also, it's okay to begin with three days a week instead of every day.

Getting fitter is one of the most common New Year resolutions. PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

First, get into a rhythm,” she says. She also stresses the importance of self-compassion when routines slip. “Faltering is normal. Restart when you can,” she says.

Breaking addictions

Distancing oneself from triggers may be necessary when dealing with addictions, Tasneem says, including stepping away from friends' groups or social settings. Quitting ‘cold turkey’ works for some, but “reducing frequency is more effective for others”. She also highlights the seven-minute rule: “If you can distract yourself for seven minutes, the urge often subsides.”

7-step method

Life and career coach Bhavani Arun says goals are more likely to succeed when approached methodically. “One needs to be clear on what they want to achieve and why,” she says, noting that

goals without purpose rarely sustain momentum.

The next step is identifying the pay-off. “Ask yourself what you really gain by achieving it,” she says, adding that recognising both tangible and emotional benefits helps anchor motivation.

Anticipating obstacles is important. Financial constraints, physical limitations, or family responsibilities can affect plans. “You should have an idea of what could go wrong and what your alternative plans are,” she explains.

Preparation follows, through listing the skills and knowledge required. “If learning something new can bring more work, recognition, or flexibility, it should be part of the plan,” she says.

Support systems matter too. Bhavani says learning from mentors or peers who have already walked a similar path can save time and effort. It is important to have a detailed action plan with start and end dates, she adds.

She also highlights visualisation. “Imagining how you would feel after achieving the goal trains the brain to believe it is possible,” she adds.

Facing obstacles

Many habits that derail goals are often old coping patterns, not personal flaws, says Mamtha Rajesh, a psychotherapist and breathwork therapist. “Question when and why these patterns developed, and whether they are still needed,” she says, noting that unresolved stress or fear often causes people to repeat the same cycle.

Change takes more than willpower. “Breathwork helps release emotional responses held in the body, allowing people to act from the present,” she says. Tasneem adds that habits such as procrastination or anger are particularly difficult to break. “If these patterns begin to disrupt daily life, professional support may be needed,” she says.

POPCORN Lingo leela

In his ‘Mann ki Baat’, Modi has praised the efforts of an organisation in Dubai teaching Kannada. Out here, you will find the prime minister’s many admirers endorsing his sentiments — “Great to teach Kannada to Indians settled in the UAE, but what’s this bakwaas about teaching it to Indians settled in Bengaluru?”

Sniff sniff

An Air India pilot about to take off from Vancouver was stopped. Turns out he was smelling of booze. Curious problem with pilots — you can’t barricade them midway and say, ‘Blow maadi’, no?

More live shows are hiring sign language interpreters

A recent rap concert for the deaf community in Bengaluru featured eight professionals

BARKHA KUMARI
TEAM METROLIFE

Rangoli Metro Art Centre, M G Road, recently hosted a rap concert exclusively for 70 hearing-impaired and hard-of-hearing attendees. Eight volunteers interpreted the lyrics and beats of three rap artists in Indian Sign Language (ISL). Two extra speakers and sub-woofers allowed the audience to feel the music through vibrations, while lights were synced to the rhythm.

It was an unforgettable evening for Hemanth, 27, and Balaji, 28. In written responses to *Metrolife*, the IT professionals said they danced, felt goosebumps, and connected with the lyrics like never before. They say their family and friends cannot fully or meaningfully interpret songs.

The three-hour concert, called Deafcon, was an initiative of The Inclusion Movement, and its second edition is scheduled for February. The NGO’s cofounder, Vishnu Soman, lauds the Coldplay world tour, the Indian Premier League, and Bollywood films like ‘83’ and ‘Sitaare Zameen Par’ for bringing sign language interpretation into the mainstream. Yet, he says, the entertainment sector in India needs to create many more opportunities for the deaf. “The young deaf population in India is more independent than previous generations. They are earning well and are highly social online. But in the real world, they still lack accessible cultural experiences,” he explains.

Bengaluru’s cultural scene is warming up to the concept. Last year, interpreters were roped in to sign American artiste



‘Deafcon’, held last month at Rangoli Metro Art Centre, M G Road, featured three rappers and eight ISL interpreters, of whom six were deaf and two non-deaf. The show was attended by 70 hearing-impaired and hard-of-hearing individuals.



Madame Gandhi’s concert at the Echoes of Earth music festival, bring a Hindi band’s gig to life at the India Inclusion Summit, and provide interpretation for the devised performance ‘Talk to Me’, which paired a deaf performer with non-deaf artistes. The Museum of Art and Photography, Kasturba Road, also collaborates with facilitators for ISL interpretation at public programmes. The Indian Music Experience museum in J P Nagar hired interpreters for a conference and for select discussions last year, and is mulling onboarding them for their cultural programmes too.

Interpreter shortage

Priyanka Kalyan from Bengaluru’s Dr S R Chandrasekhar Institute of Speech and Hearing, says interpreters are currently far more in demand at conferences, job fairs, and orientation programmes at corporate companies, than at entertainment shows, though interest in the latter is slowly growing.

Deaf activist Alim Chandani points out that India’s Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act mandates inclusion, yet large concerts and comedy tours remain largely inaccessible. “Accessibility decisions are often left to the artiste rather than the organiser, which

WHERE TO TRAIN

RCI-approved two-year diploma courses are offered in cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Thiruvananthapuram, and Indore. To upskill certified interpreters, EnAble India launched the ISL Interpreting Fellowship in Bengaluru last year, focusing on receptive and expressive interpreting, translation accuracy, and ethical practices. While a certification course is currently unavailable in Karnataka, Bengaluru’s Dr S R Chandrasekhar Institute of Speech and Hearing is considering introducing one, says its sign language coordinator Priyanka Kalyan. A freelance interpreter can earn Rs 1,000 per hour for a show.

is unusual. In the US, accessibility is a standard requirement at major concerts, such as Beyoncé’s, under disability law. In India, many organisers remain unaware of these legal obligations,” says Chandani. He is the mission leader for Hear A Million, an EnAble India initiative for the

deaf community.

He adds that concerts lasting over two hours require at least four interpreters, but there is a shortage — there are not more than 1,000 certified interpreters in India. These professionals must be certified by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI). “However, it is generally accepted if a CODA (Child of a Deaf Adult) provides interpretation at live shows without RCI certification,” adds Soman.

Interpreting performances differs greatly from everyday conversation. Chandani trains interpreters in advance and rehearses with artistes to align “expression, emotion, and movement”. The work involves conceptual translation rather than word-for-word rendering, drawing on a song’s rhythm, emotion, and cultural context. “Song lists should be shared in advance, but we often receive them late, sometimes only on the day of the event,” he says.

City-based ISL interpreters J D Santhosh, Nida Fatima A Bhavnagary, and Shivam Vadhera concur. They say that going on stage without preparation sometimes leads to misinterpretation, delays, and the guilt of letting the deaf community down. Poor audio systems and unfamiliar languages make last-minute interpretation tougher, they add.

Top varsities, free courses: A quick guide for the curious

ANUSHA MARY JONES
TEAM METROLIFE

Harvard University

‘Fundamentals of neuroscience: neurons and networks’ is a six-week programme, exploring the basics of synapses, how neurons communicate with each other and the role of neuromodulation. A course titled ‘Modern masterpieces of world literature’ takes a deep dive into the writers of modern world literature and how their work transcends national and linguistic boundaries. ‘PredictionX: Omens, oracles & prophecies’ offers an overview of divination systems, ranging from ancient Chinese bone burning to modern astrology. ‘Negotiating salary’, a 15-minute lesson, teaches salary negotiation techniques. [Visit *pll.harvard.edu*](#)

IISC

IISC, Bengaluru, introduces a free deep learning course, which will run from January 19 to April 10, 2026. The course covers the history and evolution of deep learning with computational efficiency, fundamentals of image representation, preprocessing and data augmentation, and more. [Details on *tisc.ac.in*](#)

Caltech

California Institute of Technology (Caltech)’s website offers free access to ‘The Feynman Lectures on Physics’ (feynmanlectures.caltech.edu). Richard Feynman, a Nobel laureate, delivered those lectures from 1961-1964 at the institute. ‘Grow with Google’ teaches cybersecurity, business intelligence, advanced data analytics, digital marketing, e-commerce, project management, IT automation-learning, Python, Git and UX design. [Look up *caltech.edu*](#)

Stanford University

In a course titled ‘The threat of nuclear terrorism’, former US secretary of defence and a team of international experts explore the threats of growing nuclear terrorism and explain the necessary guidelines to combat it. ‘Your body inside and out’ is a course that focuses on how one can slow ageing through exercise. In ‘Introduction to haptics’, participants will learn how to build, programme, and control haptic devices, which are mechatronic devices that allow users to feel virtual or remote environments. [Visit online. *stanford.edu*](#)

Pet boarding: Demand on the rise for customised care

This holiday season, they enquired about their living conditions, and feeding and grooming routines

SHRADDHA A K
TEAM METROLIFE

Pet boarding facilities in Bengaluru saw an increased demand for personalised care and home-like environment for their pets, including exotic animals and birds, this holiday season.

Many pet parents chose the service after enquiring about the space available and the level of supervision provided at the facility.

While overall demand this season was largely in line with last year, some facilities saw people leaving their pets behind for longer periods. Per-day boarding costs at the facilities *Metrolife* spoke to ranged from Rs 600 to Rs 800.

More exotic pets

Vignesh, from the management team at Papa’s Lifeline Pet Clinic, a veterinary clinic that also offers boarding services in Jayanagar, said people are now particular about whether their pets are kept in open spaces or cages. They are also requesting grooming services and physical examinations for pets that are staying for a longer duration. “We take the larger breeds out-



Paw-sitive Pet Boarding, Kaggadasapura, currently has seven cats and 12 dogs in their care. PIC: NAVEEN KRISHNA REDDY

side for walks, while we let smaller pets move within the premises under supervision,” he shared.

The clinic also runs a separate unit for exotic pets such as rabbits, hamsters, turtles, snakes and birds. Since December, it has seen a 15% increase in these admissions despite boarding charges for them going up to Rs 1,500 per day. “Each animal has specific temperature, humidity and feeding needs, which are monitored by dedicated staff,” he said.

Longer duration

Home-based boarding centres,

meanwhile, reported a rise in enquiries this year but they restricted the admissions to provide adequate attention for each pet. Naveen Krishna Reddy, owner of Paw-sitive Pet Boarding in Kaggadasapura, turned down several requests, and currently has 12 dogs and seven cats in his care.

Another home boarder, Shalini Suresh of Sona Pet Care and Boarding, also in Kaggadasapura, says the duration of boarding period this year increased to two weeks, from a week or less earlier. “Pet parents are now keen on knowing the feeding schedules and routines their pets will follow while under our care.” To reduce stress, she keeps single cats in individual rooms.

Temporary home

Shruti K, an IT engineer, left her two cats at a boarding facility in Hebbal for half a week over Christmas. “I asked them to ensure my cats were fed controlled portions, and their fur was brushed regularly, as they are Persian cats. I also requested extra care for my older cat, who is seven years old,” she said.

Travelling without pets is not the only reason owners chose boarding facilities this season. Abigail S, who rescued a puppy in early December, opted for temporary boarding as her apartment did not allow pets. “I needed a place for him to stay until I found him a foster or adoptive family,” she said. The puppy has since been adopted.

Group debating safety in public places gets traction

ASHIKA GOWDA
TEAM METROLIFE

A city-based social entrepreneur is giving people a platform to talk about how they negotiate their safety in public spaces.

Devina S, founder of ‘Text when you get home’, says everyday safety is not only about major incidents, but about constantly making small decisions like which road to take or whether to stay on a call while walking.

While the initiative centres on the experiences of women and gender-diverse people, the events are open to all, Devina adds.

The initiative started four years ago, and has recently come back into focus because of a ‘safety walk’ it organised at Cubbon Park. The two-hour walk, held in the evening, saw 11 participants aged 18 to 75. Using printed

maps, writing prompts, stickers, and postcards, participants



Devina S, founder of the initiative.

marked places where they felt safe or unsafe as it grew darker. In a discussion later that night, many shared that they were more cautious of their surroundings when walking alone, particularly in desolate areas. They also noted how they felt safer walking in groups than alone.

The initiative holds discussions, talks, and art-based sessions. The 32-year-old started it

after experiencing stalking in broad daylight while she was living in New York City in 2021. What stayed with her was how common such experiences were, and how quietly people live with everyday fear. On moving to Bengaluru, she created the platform to provide a space for these conversations.

Next safety walk in the third week of January. Visit [@textwhenyougethome](#) on Instagram.

Docu film on activist couple Gail-Bharat

An 80-minute documentary on US-born Indian sociologist and Dalit rights activist Gail Omvedt and her husband, activist-intellectual Bharat Patankar, will be screened at Bangalore International Centre, Domlur, on January 7, 6.30 pm. Directed by filmmaker Somnath Waghmare, ‘Gail &

Bharat’ traces Gail’s landmark anti-caste scholarship and her role in globalising Phule-Ambedkar thought, alongside Patankar’s grassroots struggles for land, water and dignity. Waghmare will be in conversation with journalist Sudipto Mondal. *To register, visit [bangaloreinternationalcentre.org](#)*

EVENTS

Comedy drama

A bittersweet comedy ‘Jigsaw’, directed by Faisal Alkazi, will be staged on January 3, 3.30 pm and 7.30 pm, at Ranga Shankara, J P Nagar. It follows the life of a dying Parsi man who is reuniting with his three grown-up children. Tickets online.

All-women play

‘Bay Tumba Nakbidi’, a Kannada comedy play, will be staged on January 4, 7 pm, at Indian Institute of World Culture, Basavanagudi. Here, two women share their problems with each other and attempt to solve them themselves, which often gives rise

to hilarious outcomes. Tickets online.

Fan club

Lahe Lahe Caravan is hosting a ‘Harry Potter Discussion Meet’ with Sonali Bhatia on January 4, 2.30 pm, at Atta Galatta, Indiranagar. For details, visit [@attagalatta](#) on Instagram.

Friends give new spin to kirtan

ASHIKA GOWDA
TEAM METROLIFE

A group of friends and hobby musicians in Bengaluru is giving a contemporary spin to kirtan — gatherings for devotional singing, usually held in temples. Instead, the group performs kirtans with world music arrangements. They held their first session at a creativity centre in HSR Layout last month. They call their group RAD Kirtan Jams — the name borrows Internet slang, with ‘rad’ meaning cool.

On December 14, for their first public performance, they played Indian instruments such as the harmonium, tabla and khol alongside guitars, djembes, darbuka and keyboards. They had rearranged traditional compositions, including ‘Bam bam hare har’, ‘Radhe Radhe Govinda’, and ‘Om namah Shivay’, with layered instrumentation.

Founder Gaurav Gupta says the session drew around 25 participants, ranging from college students to artists, yoga practitioners, IT professionals and musicians. Gupta said many attendees



The debut performance of RAD Kirtan Jams was attended by 25 people.

were looking for a break from their screen-heavy routines. Their next performance is coming up this month. The group has also received invitations from about five people to perform at their homes.

A marketing and branding professional, Gupta said these chanting meetups are not positioned as religious events. Instead, they focus on “grounding, music, and collective participation” in what he describes as a “modern and open setting.”

The idea took shape in February 2024, when Gupta hosted a kirtan at his home in Domlur for around 15 people. The initiative paused after the death of his close friend, a yoga teacher, in March, but was revived last month following encouragement from friends.

Visit [@radkirtan jams](#) on Instagram.

KSEAB mandates web-streaming II PU practical exams to curb malpractice

No minimum passing marks for the examination

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) has made web-streaming mandatory for practical exams of II PU courses, this year.

In view of some students securing full marks in practicals and failing to score even passing marks in the theory exams, the Board has instructed all the centres to webcast the practical

exams. The Board will monitor the examination online. The entire process will be Artificial Intelligence enabled.

Detailed circular issued

The Board has issued a detailed circular on this and the process to install CCTV cameras at practical exam centres has already begun as the practical exams will be held between January 27 and February 14. Practical exams will be held



Practical exams will be held for 30 marks while the theory will be for 70 marks. DH FILE PHOTO

for 30 marks while the theory will be for 70 marks. If a student secures minimum 21 marks in theory they will be declared pass. "As there is no minimum mark limit in practical, in most cases the students are

Even in practical exams, 10 marks will be attendance-based and practical will be held for the remaining 20 marks.

From this year, the Board has even reduced the minimum passing marks to 33% as against 35% which was in practice all these years. "Both theory and practical put together, if they secure 30 marks, they will be declared pass," the official added.

"Awarding highest marks even for the students who have not performed well in practicals is nothing but a malpractice. To avoid any such malpractices by the practical exam centres, it has decided to go for web-streaming," explained the official.

Pvt schools cry hoarse on tagging students

Seek to know why list of unauthorised schools not published

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Associated Management for Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka expressed strong disapproval of the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board's (KSEAB) decision to tag SSLC students from schools, which have not renewed their recognition, to nearby private and government schools.

Dubbing the move 'illegal', the association pointed to the directions issued by the Special House Committee constituted expressly to address the problem of schools that have not renewed their recognition. "If the government is so particular about recognition, and is concerned about the plight of students at such schools, why has it not identified and published a list of these unauthorised institutions," asked D Shashi

Kumar, the general secretary of the association.

Former BJP MLC Arun Shahapur, meanwhile, sought to draw the government's attention to the difficulties involved in getting recognition renewed. "Why is the board concerned with recognition? Once a student enrolls at a school, and one's details are entered into the Students' Achievement Tracking System, the board is obliged to allow that student to appear for the exam," he said.

MLC Puttanna too has written to the Principal Secretary of the Department of School Education and Literacy, seeking directions to the KSEAB to withdraw the order on tagging children to nearby schools. "Despite the House Committee making it clear that students of schools that have not renewed their recognition be allowed to write the exam, the board issuing such an order is unacceptable," said Puttanna.

Data indicates that more than 44,000 children across the state are yet to register for the SSLC examinations, with officials claiming that these were students of schools that have pending recognition dues.

India lost 166 tigers last year; 60% deaths outside protected areas

PAVAN KUMAR H HUBBALLI, DHNS



Karnataka reported three incidents of unnatural deaths of tigers in 2025.

India lost nearly 166 tigers in 2025, second highest in last five years. Worryingly, 60% of these tigers died outside the protected areas.

According to the data compiled by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), the statutory body monitoring the project tiger, Madhya Pradesh, which is home to the highest number of tigers (785), reported the death of 55 tigers. This was followed by Maharashtra 38, Karnataka 15, Kerala 13 and Assam 12 tiger deaths. As per the 2022 tiger census Karnataka was home to 563 tigers, followed by Uttarakhand 560 and Maharashtra 444.

Shrinking habitat and increasing population of tigers has resulted in the majority of tiger reserves reaching saturation levels.

NTCA data shows that 70% of the tiger deaths are due to natural reasons, due to territorial fights.

Experts expressed concern regarding the excess use of electric fencing across India that is resulting in deaths of not just tigers, but also elephants, leopards and other wild animals. They also say that less than 5% tiger mortality of the overall population is not a worrying concern and given its high population, the deaths would be naturally high.

Qamar Quereshi, former

nodal officer with the Wildlife Institute of India-NTCA Tiger Cell, says India's tiger mortality rate is not alarming or worrying. "Due to lack of space, the majority of tigers are dispersing out of protected areas. This is resulting in accidental deaths of both humans and tigers. However, these numbers haven't reached alarming levels. India has put in an excellent reporting mechanism, which is resulting in recording of each and every death. Unnatural deaths of tigers have come down drastically in India," he says.

Given its high mortality rates, NTCA earlier used to not record the death of tiger cubs. However, in 2025 it has reported the death of 31 cubs.

India was home to at least 3,682 tigers as per the All-India Tiger Estimation (AITE) conducted in 2022. India recorded its worst tiger deaths in 2023 when 182 tigers died, followed by 166 in 2025, which is 40 more

than the previous year.

Karnataka, in 2025 reported three incidents of unnatural deaths of tigers where the state lost three adult tigers and four cubs.

Another eight tigers died of natural deaths. However, this data does not include the death of five cubs that were shifted to a rehabilitation centre after being rescued from the wild.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) P C Ray says: "The perception that so many tigers have died doesn't give correct picture, since death of cubs should not be counted among tiger deaths. The birth rate and survival rate of tigers in Karnataka is much higher than the mortality rate. Majority of the female tigress is littering three to five cubs a season because of better protection and food availability. Even with 50% survival chances, the number of tiger population in the state is huge."

Trial courts can't grant endless indulgence to cross examine witnesses, says High Court

BENGALURU, DHNS

When an accused, despite repeated and sufficient opportunities, chooses not to cross-examine a material witness, the trial court cannot be expected to grant endless indulgence, the Karnataka High Court has said in a recent judgement.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadam said this while dismissing the petition filed by a retired teacher from Vijayapura.

The petitioner Damalu Shankar Lamani had approached the high court challenging the trial court order rejecting his application filed under CrPC section 311, seeking to cross-examine the complainant.

The complainant Malleshi Rajapur, junior engineer, had visited Shankar Lamani's house on December 26, 2020, for the purpose of collection of the pending electricity bill. It is alleged that Shankar Lamani and another person obstructed Malleshi from per-



forming his duty and abused him. A case was registered for offences under IPC sections 353 (assault or criminal force against a public servant), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 504.

The trial commenced in the case and on November 17, 2022, the complainant entered the witness box and was fully examined-in-chief by the prosecution on the very day.

On June 20, 2025, the trial court rejected Shankar Lamani's application seeking to cross-examine the complainant noting that he failed

to cross-examine the complainant despite repeated opportunities.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadam noted that as per the records, the petitioner consistently failed to avail of the opportunity to cross-examine spanning over a period of nearly four years.

On several hearings, the trial court had granted time sought for cross-examination by imposing costs, the high court observed.

"This Court is of the considered view that the present case exemplifies a classic instance of abuse of the process of Court. The offence alleged is one punishable under Section 353 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, involving an act of violence against a public servant. While the complainant has approached the Court seeking redressal for the alleged violent act, the conduct of the accused demonstrates that, by repeatedly seeking adjournments, he has effectively subjected the complainant to

prolonged harassment and inconvenience. The manner in which adjournments have been sought from the year 2022 till as late as December 2025 reflects a deliberate attempt to protract the trial and frustrate the course of justice," Justice Mahadum said.

The court further said, "Undoubtedly, an accused is entitled to a fair trial, and the right of cross-examination is a valuable right forming part of such a fair trial. However, the right to a fair trial cannot be stretched to such an extent as to permit an accused to indefinitely delay proceedings under the guise of seeking opportunities. Fairness in criminal proceedings is not a one-sided concept; it extends equally to the victim and to the administration of justice. When an accused, despite repeated and sufficient opportunities, chooses not to cross-examine a material witness, the Court cannot be expected to grant endless indulgence."

Man killed in wild jumbo attack

SHANIVARASANTHE (KODAGU DIST), DHNS: A 61-year-old man died in a wild jumbo attack near Sanganaiahana-pura village, under Ganaguru Grama Panchayat limits near Shanivarasanth in Kodagu district, on Thursday.

Ponnappa of Hulase village, Somwarpet taluk, is the deceased. It is said that Ponnappa was living alone at Sanganaiahana pura for the last few years, while his wife and children were at Hulase village.

It is suspected that he might have died in a wild jumbo attack two days ago, and his body was found by the villagers on Thursday.

According to locals, they heard the sound of elephant trumpeting on Tuesday night. Ponnappa might have possibly come out of the house to drive the jumbo away, when it attacked and killed him.

The tin, carried by Ponnappa, and the elephant's footprints were seen near the body, according to ACF Gopal.

Auto driver found murdered

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 36-year-old auto driver was stabbed to death outside his house in KP Aghara on Wednesday night.

The deceased has been identified as Rechanna, a native of Kollegal.

Police said that Rechanna, who was living with his family, had a few drinks at a bar and returned home late at night. When he stepped out of his house, the assailants allegedly stabbed him in the back and escaped.

The incident came to light in the early hours when his relatives found Rechanna lying motionless. They initially assumed that he had fallen asleep under the influence of alcohol. However, when they checked on him later, they found that he had died and saw the stab injuries.

They alerted KP Aghara police, who registered a case of murder and launched an investigation. The police are examining who committed the murder and the motive behind it.

Liquor sales dip in state on NYE

BENGALURU, DHNS: As the state wrapped up the holiday season, the data shows that the sale of liquor dipped on the New Year's Eve. According to the data by the Excise department, the sale of Indian Made Liquor (IML) dipped by 5.16% and the sale of beer tanked by 57.59%.

The last one week data of the state shows a 10.19% increase in the total revenue compared to the previous year. While the preference for beer grew by 1.80%, the preference for the December 31 (IML) dropped to 3.17% showing a decline of 2.78% from the previous year.

However, the preferences seems to have varied when taking the December month into consideration as data shows the preference for IML has increased 1.89% and the sales of beer dipped by 1.48%. The December sales revenue is Rs 3,559.08 crore indicating a growth of Rs 454.58 crore from the previous year.

While the monthly sales have improved, the yearly sales have seen a sharp dip. The IML sales have dipped by 186.19% and beer sales by 156.89%.

In May 2025, the state government raised the Additional Excise Duty (AED) on beer from 195% to 200% and increased IML prices by Rs 15 to Rs 20 per quart for economic brands.

Honour killing: Govt ready to frame law, says minister

DHARWAD, DHNS: The state government will bring in a special law if necessary for curbing honour killing, Social Welfare Minister H C Mahadevappa has said.

Speaking to reporters here on Thursday, the minister said that directions have been issued to ensure a transparent investigation into the murder of a young woman who had entered into inter-caste marriage at Inamveerapur village in Hubballi taluk.

The appointment of a special public prosecutor for the investigation, establishment of a fast-track court, and rehabilitation measures including housing, employment, and a compensation package for the affected family will be discussed in Cabinet meeting, the minister said.

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ಇಮೇಲ್ : generalmanager@srisudhabank.com

ಸ್ಟ್ರಾಸ್ ಸ್ಟಾಫಿನ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ (ಕಾಯ್ದೆ ಭದ್ರತಾ ಅಸಕ್ತಿ (ಜಾರಿ) ನಿಯಮಗಳು, 2002ರ ನಿಯಮ 8(1) ರಡಿ ಅನುಬಂಧ IV)

ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷ, ಕೆಳಸಹಕಾರದ ಶ್ರೀ ಸುಧಾ ಕೋ-ಆಪರೇಟಿವ್ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಲಿಮಿಟೆಡ್ ಅಧಿಕೃತ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಯಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಈ ಸೋಟೀಸ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ತಿಳಿಸುವಂತೆ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 17-01-2025 ರಂದು ಇದ್ದಂತೆ ರೂ.1,28,33,661/- (ಒಂದು ಕೋಟಿ ಇಪ್ಪತ್ತಿಂಟು ಲಕ್ಷ ಮೂವತ್ತು ಮೂರು ಸಾವಿರ ಅರುನೂರು ಅರವತ್ತೊಂದು ರೂಪಾಯಿಗಳು ಮಾತ್ರ) ಮೊತ್ತವನ್ನು ಸದರಿ ಸೋಟೀಸ್ ತಲುಪಿದ ದಿನಾಂಕದಿಂದ 60 ದಿನಗಳ ಒಳಗೆ ಮರುಪಾವತಿ ಮಾಡುವಂತೆ ಸಾಲಗಾರರಾದ ಶ್ರೀ ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ವಿ ಬಿನ್ ವೆಂಕಟಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಶ್ರೀ ಕೆ.ರತ್ನಾ ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ಬಿನ್ ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ವಿ.ನಂ.25/4, 1ನೇ ಮುಖರಸ್ತೆ, ಗ್ಯಾಲಕ್ಸಿ ಬಾರ್ ಹತ್ತಿರ, ಬ್ಯಾಲಾರಾಯನಪುರ, ಮೈಸೂರು ರಸ್ತೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು-560026 ಮತ್ತು ಜಾಮೀನುದಾರರಾದ ಶ್ರೀ.ಪರ್ವತ ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ಬಿನ್ ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ವಿ. ನಂ.25/4, 1ನೇ ಮುಖರಸ್ತೆ, ಗ್ಯಾಲಕ್ಸಿ ಬಾರ್ ಹತ್ತಿರ, ಬ್ಯಾಲಾರಾಯನಪುರ, ಮೈಸೂರು ರಸ್ತೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು-560026. ಇವರಿಗೆ ಕರೆ ನೀಡಿ ಅರ್ಥಿಕ ಸ್ಥಿತಿಗಳ ಭದ್ರತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಪೂರೈಕೆ ರಚನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಭದ್ರತಾ ಅಸಕ್ತಿ ಜಾರಿ ಕಾಯ್ದೆ, 2002ರ ಅನ್ವಯ ಮತ್ತು ಭದ್ರತಾ ಅಸಕ್ತಿ (ಜಾರಿ) ನಿಯಮಗಳು 2002ರ ನಿಯಮ 3 ಓದಿಕೊಂಡಂತೆ ಪ್ರಕರಣ 13(12) ರ ಅನ್ವಯ ಪ್ರವರ್ತವಾದ ಅಧಿಕಾರ ಚಲಾಯಿಸಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 17-01-2025 ರಂದು ಡಿಮಾಂಡ್ ಸೋಟೀಸ್ ನೀಡಿದ್ದರೂ ಸಹ, ಸಾಲಗಾರರ/ಜಾಮೀನುದಾರ ಸಾಲದ ಬಾಕಿಯನ್ನು ಮರುಪಾವತಿ ಮಾಡಲು ವಿಫಲರಾಗಿರುವುದರಿಂದ ಸಾಲಗಾರರಿಗ/ಜಾಮೀನುದಾರರಿಗೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕರಿಗೆ ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ಸೂಚಿಸುವುದೇನೆಂದರೆ, ಭದ್ರತಾ ಅಸಕ್ತಿ (ಜಾರಿ) ನಿಯಮಗಳು, 2002 ರ ನಿಯಮ 8 ಓದಿಕೊಂಡಂತೆ ಕಾಯ್ದೆಯ ಪ್ರಕರಣ 13 ರ ಉಪಪ್ರಕರಣ (4) ರ ಅನ್ವಯ ಪ್ರವರ್ತವಾಗಿರುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರಗಳನ್ನು ಚಲಾಯಿಸಿ ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ವಿವರಿಸಿರುವ ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 02-01-2026 ರಂದು ಕೆಳಸಹಕಾರದ ಸ್ಟಾಫಿನಸಹಜಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ನಿರ್ದಿಷ್ಟವಾಗಿ ಸಾಲಗಾರರಿಗೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕರಿಗೆ ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ಎಚ್ಚರಿಸುವುದೇನೆಂದರೆ, ಯಾರೂ ಕೂಡ ಸದರಿ ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ವ್ಯವಹರಿಸದಾರರು ಹಾಗೂ ಒಂದು ವೇಳೆ ಸದರಿ "ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ಸಂಬಂಧ ವ್ಯವಹರಿಸಿದ್ದೇ ಆದರೆ ಅದು "ಶ್ರೀ ಸುಧಾ ಕೋ-ಆಪರೇಟಿವ್ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಲಿ. ಜಯನಗರ ಶಾಖೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು-560004". ಇದರ ಸಾಲದ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಮಿ.ಬಿ-201800000072 ಮತ್ತು ಮಿ.ಬಿ-201800000076 ರ ಸಂಬಂಧ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 01/01/2026 ರಂದು ಇದ್ದಂತೆ ಆಸಲು, ಬಡ್ತಿ ಮತ್ತಿತರ ಬಾಬು ಬದಲೇಕಾಣಿಯು ರೂ.1,17,02,219/- (ಒಂದು ಕೋಟಿ ಹದಿನೆಳು ಲಕ್ಷ ಎರಡು ಸಾವಿರ ಎರಡುನೂರು ಹತ್ತೊಂಕು ರೂಪಾಯಿಗಳು ಮಾತ್ರ) ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಖಾತೆ ಚುಕ್ಕಾ ದಿನಾಂಕವಿರುವ ಬಡ್ತಿ ಮತ್ತಿತರ ಬಿಹೆಗಗಳ ಬಾಬು ಪಾವತಿಸಿಗೊಳಪಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಭದ್ರತಾ ಅಸಕ್ತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಬದಿಪಡಿಸಿಲಾಗಿ ಲಭ್ಯವಿರುವ ಸಮಯದ ಸಂಬಂಧ ಕಾಯ್ದೆಯ ಪ್ರಕರಣ 13(8) ರ ಉಪಬಂಧಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಸಾಲಗಾರರ ಗಮನ ಸೆಳೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಶ್ರೀ ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ವಿ ಬಿನ್ ವೆಂಕಟಸ್ವಾಮಿ ರವರಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ವಿವರಗಳು: ಐಟಿಒ-01:-ಬೃಹತ್ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ 41ನೇ ವಾರ್ಡ್ ಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಬ್ಯಾಲಾರಾಯನಪುರ, 1ನೇ ಮುಖರಸ್ತೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ 25ನೇ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ (ಮಾಜಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ 36)ರ ಪಿ.ಬಿ.ಡಿ 41-51-25ನೇ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಸ್ಟ್ರಾಸ್ ಗೆ ಚೆಕ್ಬುಕು: ಪೂರ್ವಕ್ಕೆ: ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ-25, ಪಶ್ಚಿಮಕ್ಕೆ: ವಿ ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ರವರಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಇದೇ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯ ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ ಭಾಗದ ಸ್ವತ್ತು, ಉತ್ತರಕ್ಕೆ: ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ-24 ಮತ್ತು 26, ದಕ್ಷಿಣಕ್ಕೆ:ರಸ್ತೆ, ಈ ಮಧ್ಯೆಯಿರುವ, ಪೂರ್ವ ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ 25 ಅಡಿಗಳು, ಉತ್ತರ-ದಕ್ಷಿಣ : 50 ಅಡಿಗಳು ಒಟ್ಟು 1250 ಚದರ ಅಡಿಗಳ ನಿವೇಶನ. ಐಟಿಒ-02:- ಬೃಹತ್ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ 41ನೇ ವಾರ್ಡ್ ಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಬ್ಯಾಲಾರಾಯನಪುರ, 1ನೇ ಮುಖರಸ್ತೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ 25/4ನೇ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ.ಪಿ.ಬಿ.ಡಿ 41-44-25/4ನೇ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಸ್ಟ್ರಾಸ್ ಗೆ ಚೆಕ್ಬುಕು:- ಪೂರ್ವಕ್ಕೆ: ಇದೇ ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ಪೈಕಿ ಬೆಟ್ಟಗೋಡರ ಪಕ್ಕಿ, ನಿರ್ಮಾಲರವರಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಸ್ವತ್ತು, ಪಶ್ಚಿಮಕ್ಕೆ:ಇದೇ ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ಪೈಕಿ ವಿ.ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪರವರಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ ಭಾಗದ ಸ್ವತ್ತು,ಉತ್ತರಕ್ಕೆ: ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ-24, ದಕ್ಷಿಣಕ್ಕೆ: ರಸ್ತೆ, ಈ ಮಧ್ಯೆಯಿರುವ, ಪೂರ್ವ ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ:15 ಅಡಿಗಳು, ಉತ್ತರ-ದಕ್ಷಿಣ : 50 ಅಡಿಗಳು ಒಟ್ಟು 750 ಚದರ ಅಡಿಗಳ ನಿವೇಶನ ಐಟಿಒ ನಂ.1 ಮತ್ತು 2ರ ನಿವೇಶನದ ಒಟ್ಟು 2000 ಚದರ ಅಡಿಗಳನ್ನು ನಿವೇಶನ, ಈ ರೀತಿ ಆಳತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಚೆಕ್ಬುಕುಬಿಡಿಸಿಲ್ಪಟ್ಟು ನಿವೇಶನವನ್ನೊಳಗೊಂಡು ಸದರಿ ನಿವೇಶನದಲ್ಲಿ ನಿರ್ಮಿಸಿರುವ ಪೂರ್ಣಕಟ್ಟಡವನ್ನೊಳಗೊಂಡ ಸ್ಟ್ರಾಸ್. ಸ್ಥಳ: ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ದಿನಾಂಕ: 02/01/2026 ಅಧಿಕೃತ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ/ಪ್ರಧಾನ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕರು ಶ್ರೀ ಸುಧಾ ಕೋ-ಆಪರೇಟಿವ್ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಲಿ., ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು-560004	ಸಾಲಗಾರರ ಹೆಸರು ಶ್ರೀ.ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ವಿ ಶ್ರೀ.ಕೆ.ರತ್ನಾ ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ ಜಾಮೀನುದಾರರ ಹೆಸರು ಶ್ರೀ.ಪರ್ವತ ಯಲ್ಲಪ್ಪ
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Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (BRIC-inStem)

An Autonomous RI of BRIC, Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Govt. of India

GKVK, POST BOX NO: 6506, Bellary Road, Bangalore-560065.

Ph: 91-80-61948001, www.instem.res.in

INVITATION FOR REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FROM ARCHITECTS / ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS

REOI Notice No: inStem/15021/15/REOI-01/2025-26 Dated 22.12.2025

The Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (inStem), is an autonomous research institute of Bio Research & Innovation Council (BRIC), under the aegis of the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India. BRIC-inStem is proposing to construct a building for the Centre for Research, Application and Training in Human Embryology (CrEATE) and transit hostel on its campus, located at GKVK, Bellary Road, Bangalore-65, together with a built-up area of approximately 6000 sqm.

Applications are invited from reputed Architects/Architectural firms for "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)" and to participate in the prequalification process. Eligible and interested firms may submit their Expression of Interest through online mode by visiting the DBT E-Wizard portal (<https://dbt.ewizard.in/HomePage/LoadSiteHomePage/iMSwYhT59NQ3to3to9tpGQ>) latest by **12.01.2026 up to 11:00Hrs**. For further details, formats, including any corrigendum issued heron, please visit the DBT E-wizard portal, CPPP (<https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app>), and our website www.instem.res.in.

Registrar, BRIC-inStem
Tender Inviting Authority

CBC 36304-11-0003-2526

Metro Railway, Kolkata

e-tender is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway for the following work : Name of work: "Replacement of roof sheets including allied works for Five Stations of Blue Line from Netaji (KNTJ) to Sahid Khudiram (KSKD) of Metro Railway Kolkata." Approx Cost of Work (Rs.) : ₹ 7,27,24,663.75, Earnest Money : ₹ 5,13,600.00, Completion Period : 09 (Nine) Months, Date and Time of Closing : 28.01.2026 at 12.00 Hrs. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the website : www.ireps.gov.in Amendments/Corrigendum, if any, would be updated only on the website.

Abridge e-Tender Notice No.: Civil-2545-2025-(Open)

Follow us at: /metrorailwaykol /metrorailkolkata

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

Divisional Railway Manager/ENGG/S.E. Railway, Ranchi-834003 acting For & On behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works : **Sl. No.;**
Notice No.; Name of Work, Tender value & EMD value respectively : (1); **DRMENGGRNC-132-2025:** Supply & loading into Railway wagons/ hoppers and unloading the same 96112 cum of 50 mm size machine crushed hard stone track ballast at Bakudih/ Rajgram /Pinargaria quarry siding for the jurisdiction of Ranchi Division (Measurement will be done at destination) ; ₹ 20,56,18,168.32; (11,78,100.00. (2); **DRMENGGRNC-133-2025:** Supply & loading into Railway wagons/ hoppers and unloading the same 100018 cum of 50 mm size machine crushed hard stone track ballast at Pakuri/ Taljhari/ Barhawra quarry siding for the jurisdiction of Ranchi Division (Measurement will be done at destination) ; ₹ 21,39,74,508.48; ₹ 12,19,900.00. **Tender Closing date & time:** 21.01.2026 at 15.00 hrs. for Sl. No. 1 & 2). Tenderers can visit the website www.ireps.gov.in for online tendering. (PR-1022)

Bescom adopts optical probe machines for accurate meter reading

SNEHA RAMESH BENGALURU, DHNS

To make meter reading fool-proof, Bescom has started using automatic optical probe machines to gather readings.

Meter readers now connect the probe to the meter, and the machine automatically collects the reading and generates a bill, reducing manual intervention.

Senior Bescom officials said the system has been in use for



three months and has improved billing accuracy.

"The automated systems improve accuracy and make the

process tamper proof. This also improves transparency," the official said.

Sources said the electricity company had received complaints that some meter readers recorded lower readings after being bribed by customers. The new technology would prevent such fraud.

"Sometimes, we observe that the meter readings of a few houses vary drastically and have received complaints that

our meter readers are recording lower values. The new system will put a stop to all such fraud," a senior official from the meters department of Bescom said.

Gruha Jyothi scheme

Sources said such incidents increased after the implementation of the Gruha Jyothi scheme.

"Some house owners ask to be billed for readings within their eligible units. I have heard some colleagues do that for

money," a meter reader told DH on condition of anonymity.

While officials said meter readers recorded lower readings, citizens had a different view.

"Many record readings late, which increases our bills. Some have recorded random values without visiting houses, resulting in higher bills. I hope this technology ends such behaviour," said Sahana B, a resident of North Bengaluru.

Visionary N Vinaya Hegde no more

MANGALURU, DHNS: Well-known educationist, industrialist, philanthropist and Nitte (Deemed to be) University Chancellor N Vinaya Hegde passed away on Thursday morning. He was 86. He is survived by his wife Sujata, daughter Ashwita R Punja, son Vishal Hegde serving as Pro-Chancellor (Administration) of Nitte (Deemed to be) University, two sisters and brothers including former Lokayukta N Santosh Hegde.



N Vinaya Hegde

Lamina Suspension Products Limited in 1975 and provided employment to thousands of youth. In 1979, Hegde launched Nitte Education Trust, guided by the conviction that education and health are the most powerful instruments of social change.

The trust which started with a modest Kannada-medium school in Nitte, today runs 43 institutions, including professional colleges and hospitals, serving more than 29,000 students.

His mortal remains were kept for public viewing at his house in Shivbhag and later at Nitte campus. The final rites were conducted in Nitte.

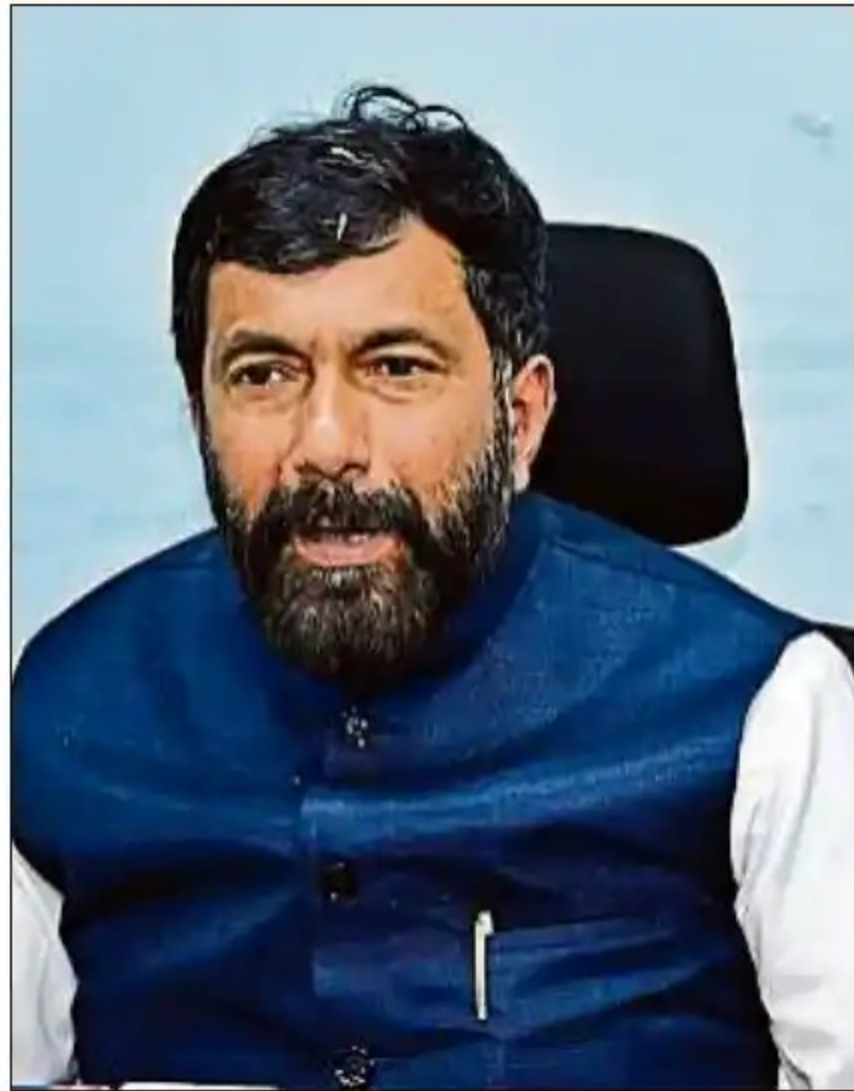
Congress high command urged to induct 50% new faces in Cabinet

HUBBALLI, DHNS

Government Chief Whip for Legislative Council Saleem Ahmed said on Thursday that the Cabinet reshuffle will likely take place after Sankranti and that the high command has been urged to replace 50% of ministers with fresh faces.

“In the backdrop of the upcoming taluk and zilla panchayat elections and to help the party retain power in the 2028 Assembly polls, the party leadership should accord priority to new faces and induct at least 50% of fresh faces in the Cabinet. The reshuffle is likely to take place after Sankranti,” the Congress MLC told reporters here.

Replying to a query,



Saleem Ahmed

Saleem Ahmed said, “No minority leader from Kittur Karnataka region has become a minister for the past two decades. There is a demand for the same. I am expecting a ministerial berth this time. It is left to the decision of CM Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar,”

he said.

On the ongoing power tussle in the ruling Congress, he said: “AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge has asked us not to cross the ‘Lakshman Rekha’.”

The MLC said that the Congress party will launch nationwide protests on January 5, opposing the Union government’s decision to replace Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act (VB G RAM G).

Saleem Ahmed dismissed the allegations of minority appeasement in giving houses to those evicted from Kogilu Layout in Bengaluru.

Ramaiah Institute of Management holds 29th convocation



(Standing, left to right) Medallists Yashaswi Sharma, Aakansha S, Chintala Ramya, Valliappam K, Pooja Sasnur and Vignesh G. (Seated, left to right) Dr Savitha Rani Ramachandran, G Ramachandra, Dr Karisiddappa, chief guest Alina Alam, M R Anandaram, Dr Parswanath H V and Dr A V Arunkumar.

The 29th annual convocation of Ramaiah Institute of Management (RIM) was held on Wednesday. The convocation began with a procession, invocation and the Ramaiah Anthem. RIM’s Dean Dr A V Arunkumar welcomed the 280 students from the 2023-25 batch who received degrees, parents, chiefs of Ramaiah Group’s institutions, alumni, members of the governing and academic councils, guests and staff of RIM, and presented the institute’s annual report.

Gold and silver medals were awarded to students for outstanding achievements in academic and co-curricular

activities. Pooja Sasnur received the gold medal in recognition of her exemplary academic performance. Post-graduate diplomas were presented to students who completed the course successfully.

Delivering the convocation address, chief guest Alina Alam, Founder and CEO, Mitti Cafe, shared her inspiring journey. She focused on dignity, inclusion, community support, courage and resilience in shaping society. “Simple ideas can succeed when driven by purpose. We all have the key to change the world”, she said.

Dr M R Seetharam,

Chairman, Gokula Education Foundation (GEF) and Dr M R Pattabhiram, Director, RIM congratulated the graduating students. The legacy of Ramaiah Group should continue through value-based education and sustained progress, they stated.

GEF’s chief executive Dr Parswanath H V, chief academic advisor Dr Karisiddappa and chief of finance G Ramachandra were present. RIM’s registrar Dr Savitha Rani Ramachandran proposed the vote of thanks and M R Anandaram, Director, GEF, declared the convocation closed.

Curated by **DH Brandspot**

Forest land worth over Rs 50k crore under litigation, says Khandre

BENGALURU, DHNS: Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre exhorted officials to prevent encroachments and protect forest lands, noting that the department was now fighting for land worth Rs 50,000 crore.

During a meeting held here on Thursday, the minister expressed concern over the death of a person in Kodagu due to elephant conflict and said protecting forest land was the need of the hour as part of efforts to prevent wildlife conflict.

He pointed out to the department’s fight to recover Peenya Plantation land from HMT and the high court case to recover land leased by British to planters in Kodagu district as examples of challenges faced in recovering forest land. “Officials should go after encroachers to save forests,” he said.

Congress issues forms to GBA seat aspirants

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Congress government has taken a pledge to hold all local body elections in 2026, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said on Thursday.

“In 2026, the Congress party has taken a pledge to hold all local body polls in the state,” Shivakumar, who is also the Karnataka Congress president, told reporters.

Recently, Shivakumar had said that the government would have to conduct Zilla Panchayat and Taluk Panchayat elections - due since 2021 - in the next 2-3 months, and asked party leaders to prepare.

On Thursday, Congress started issuing application forms for aspirants seeking the party’s tickets for elections

to five city corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

Shivakumar also said the government would work towards ensuring “peace and happiness” for citizens, and make efforts to bring “positive change” in their lives.

Shivakumar said the Congress government provided good governance in 2025. He gave the examples of the Global Investors Meet, the Bengaluru Tech Summit, fulfilment of manifesto promises and key decisions in the irrigation sector such as the Upper Krishna Project, Tungabhadra and the Mekedatu projects.

Shivakumar, who is also the water resources minister, said such “historic programmes and projects had never been implemented in his 36 years as a legislator.”

Budget preparations to begin this month: CM

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Thursday that the preparations for the 2026-27 Budget would begin this month, hinting that he would present his record 17th Budget and would continue as the chief minister.

When reporters asked when he would start preparing for the Budget, Siddaramaiah responded: “This month itself.”

Siddaramaiah’s statement may be seen as an indication of the continuing as the chief minister.

The chief minister’s statement comes days after Home Minister G Parameshwara said the high command would have to decide on the leadership issue by February, since the Budget preparation begins then.

On January 6, Sidda-

ramaiah will equal D Devaraj Urs’ record as the longest-serving chief minister in Karnataka (2,792 days). Over the last few months, the leadership debate within the ruling Congress has intensified, owing to the alleged “power-sharing agreement” between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar.

Parameshwara wishes for ‘political promotion’ this year

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Thursday expressed his desire for a “political promotion” in the new year.

“The political promotion should happen in (2026). It is left to our high command. If the high command does

it (promotion), it will happen,” Parameshwara told reporters when asked about his prospects. Parameshwara has identified himself as a chief ministerial candidate.

“I have, so far, lived as an optimist. Don’t you have (the ambition) to be-

come something in life?” Parameshwara said. “I, too, have ambitions like everyone else. When I joined politics, I aspired to become an MLA, then a minister. From each step there will be a desire to go one more step ahead,” he said.

40 dead, 115 injured in fire at Swiss New Year party

Switzerland, from Page 1

Witnesses described panicked parents rushing to the scene in cars to see whether their children were trapped inside.

Officials described how the blaze likely triggered the release of combustible gases that ignited violently and caused a flashover or backdraft.

Work is underway to identify the victims and inform their families, but “that will take time and for the time being, it is premature to give you a more precise figure,” Valais Canton police commander Frederic Gisler said during a news conference.

Guy Parmelin, who began his second term as Switzerland’s president Thursday, postponed a scheduled New Year’s address. “What should have been a moment of joy turned into a night of mourning in Crans-Montana, affecting the whole of Switzerland and abroad,” he wrote on social media.

Scheme rules, flat cost complicate Kogilu rehabilitation

Kogilu, from Page 1

Second, there has been frequent changes in the total number of families whose houses were demolished for encroaching on public land. While the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML) had stated that 167 sheds were demolished, subsequent surveys have presented varying figures. Before the CM’s promise to allot flats, revenue officials shared a list of 180 affected families. After the announcement of rehabilitation, the number rose to 280, which prompted a re-survey. The final count has reduced this to 243.

Not all affected families, however, meet the scheme-level eligibility requirements. Under the One Lakh Housing Scheme, beneficiaries are required to meet about a dozen conditions

such as a minimum domicile of five years in Bengaluru, mandatory voter ID, ration card, Aadhaar, etc. Revenue officials said many families are unable to provide required documents and allotments can proceed only after compliance checks are completed.

Once the eligibility list is final, it will be placed before the Ashraya Committee headed by the local legislator. Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, who represents Byatarayana-pura constituency, is currently not in India, it’s learnt.

What’s more, Siddaramaiah had directed the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) to provide Rs 5 lakh assistance per flat under the ‘Onti Mane’ scheme while the housing department was required to bear the bulk of the remaining amount. In

effect, the affected families were required to pay around Rs 2 lakh per flat from their pockets.

Former councillor Padmanabha Reddy said the ‘Onti Mane’ scheme is intended for beneficiaries who own plots and construct independent houses, with payments released in stages linked to construction milestones. “With the government offering two different schemes to select beneficiaries, it is depriving others even a single benefit,” he said, adding the civic body had not released even a single paisa under the scheme for the last two-and-a-half years.

Meanwhile, Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh said the number of eligible beneficiaries among the total affected families is 90. He added that they would be given the flats on January 2.

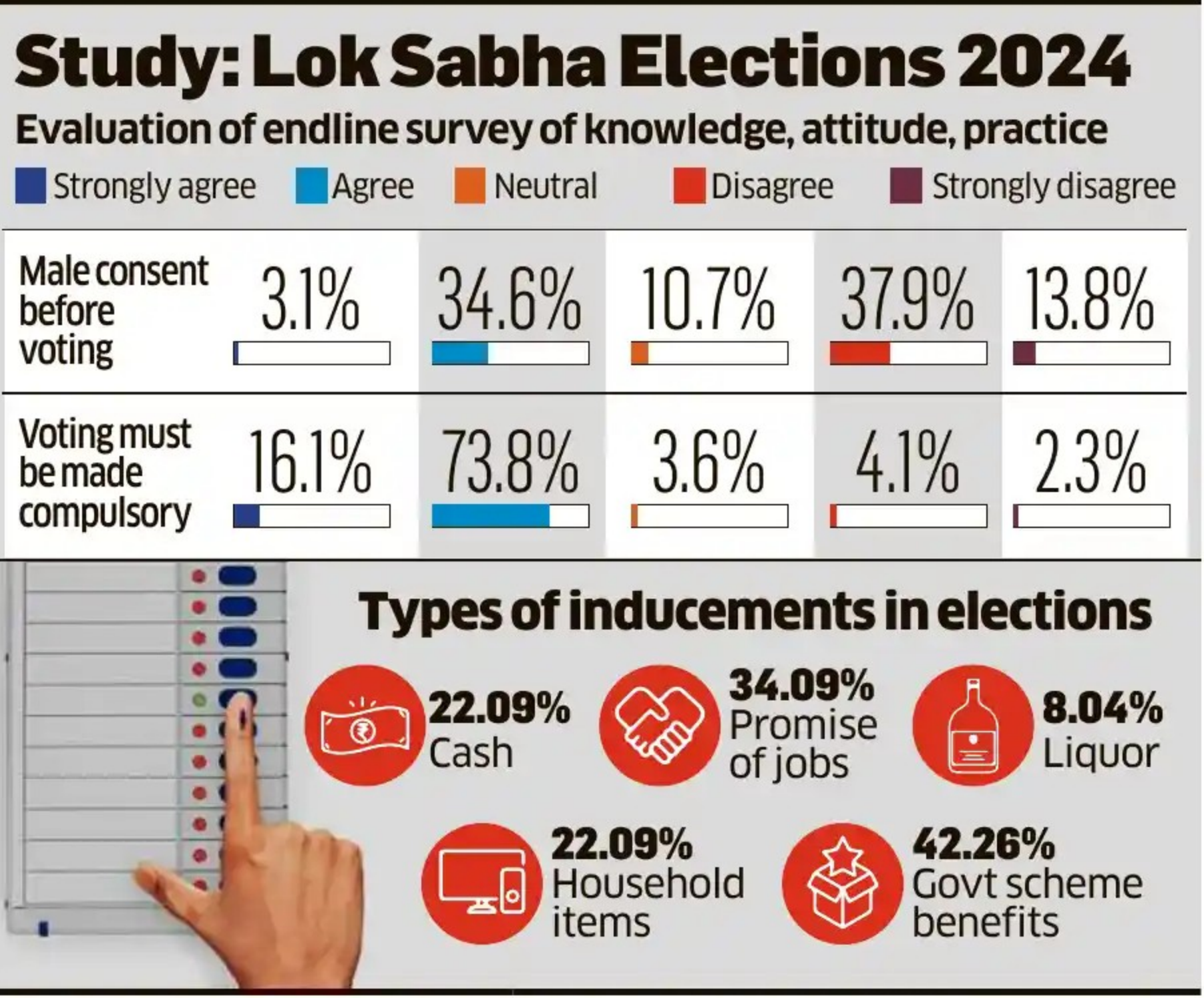
Most citizens trust elections, EVMs, shows survey

EVM, from Page 1

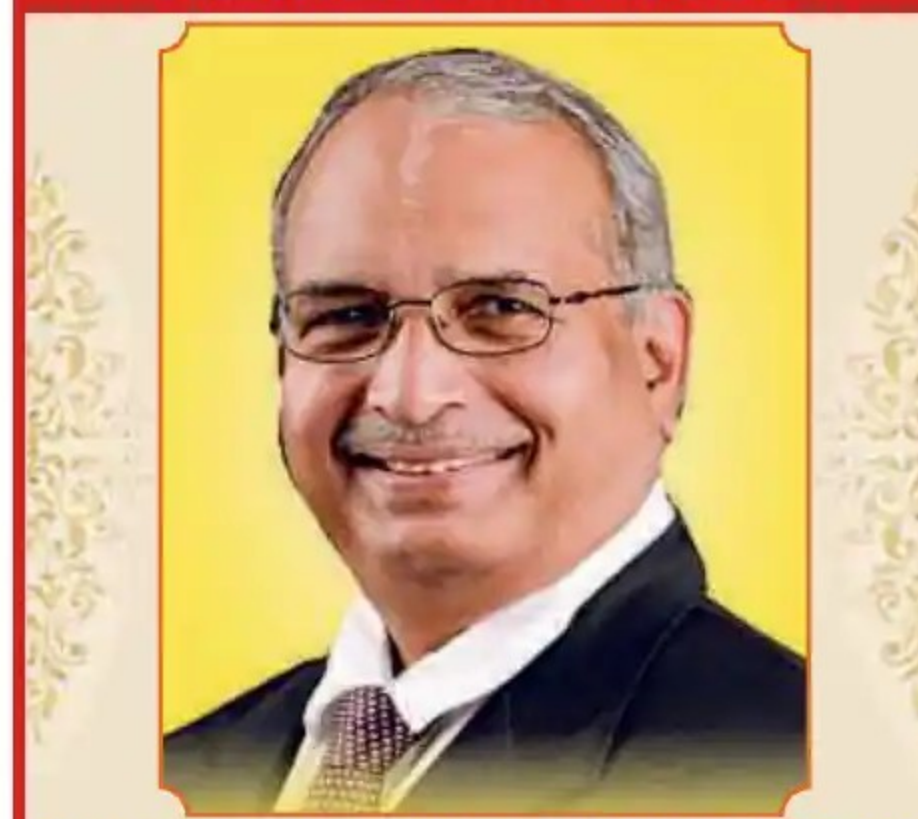
“This survey is a slap on the face of the Congress,” Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka said. “Despite this clear public trust, the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government chooses to take Karnataka backyards – announcing local body elections through ballot papers, reviving a system known

for manipulation, delays, and misuse,” he said.

Of the 5,100 respondents, 95.75% said they voted in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. “Among 4,272 respondents who were included in the voters’ list, a majority (95.44%) of respondents across all divisions confirmed that their names were correctly listed,” the report stated.



REMEMBRANCE



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(02.03.1958 - 20.12.2025)

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Director- IDF Financial Services Pvt. Ltd.
Director- Gram Serv Pvt. Ltd.
Secretary- Syndicate Bank Staff Welfare Society

SPEECH TRIBUTE on
3rd January 2026, 11.00 AM

Venue:
Dwarkanath Bhavan Committee,
Netakalappa Circle, Basavanagudi,
Bangalore-04.

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Initiative for Development
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N M Velu & Sons

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**Smt. Vijayalakshmi,
Rajavelu & Family**
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cent by weight, max – 0.5%, (c)
Matter insoluble in water per cent
by weight, max- 0.5% (d) Lead
(as Pb) per cent by weight, max
0.003% (e) Cadmium (as Cd) per
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CHANGE OF NAME

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Matthi Residency, 11th Main,
Residency, 11th Main, 5th Cross,
Malleshpalya, New Thippasandra
Post, Bengaluru-560075, have
changed our minor Son's name
from **PRANAV MAURYA**
vide affidavit dated 01-12-2025
before notary S. Subashini, Bengaluru

I, SMT. Lini Dhas Shajin, D/o.

Christudhas, aged about 38
years B/at 93, 4th A Cross,
1st Floor, Alicoba nagar, Near
UCO Bank, BTM 1st Stage,
BTM Layout, Bangalore
South, Tavarekere,
Bengaluru- 560029 have
changed my name from
LINIDHAS CHRISTUDHAS
ELIZABETH to LINI DHAS
SHAJIN vide affidavit dated
31/12/2025 before Notary
Shivakumar M N Bangalore..

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Maharashtra civic polls witness a mishmash of ideologies

3.48 cr voters to decide fate of aspirants in 2,869 wards

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

As Maharashtra heads for the much-awaited high-stakes single-phase polls to all the 29 municipal corporations on January 15, political ideologies seem to blur — a development that would surely lead to surprising results and post-poll rejigs. A total electorate of 3.48 crore will decide the fate of aspirants in 2,869 electoral wards or seats, which include the largest — 227 — in the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), India's richest civic body. The Maha Yuti — comprising the BJP, the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, and the Ajit Pawar-headed NCP — occupy

the Treasury benches. The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in the Opposition comprises the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Sharad Pawar-headed NCP (SP). However, political parties are contesting against each other in more than a dozen of the 29 corporations. In Mumbai, Uddhav has tied up with cousin and MNS president Raj Thackeray, and has created a new front which would take on the BJP-Shiv Sena combine, from which the NCP has separated. The Congress, on the other hand, has strayed away from the MVA and forged an alliance with the Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi. Thus, there are three fronts

in the BMC, besides several current and former I.N.D.I.A-bloc members—including the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP) — contesting independently. The BJP has formed an alliance in the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC), while the Congress will go solo. Meanwhile, the Shiv Sena (UBT), MNS, and the NCP (SP) will contest as allies, making the polls triangular like Mumbai. Meanwhile, the NCP and the NCP (SP) — otherwise on opposite benches in the Assembly — have surprisingly come together to contest the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) and the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC). The Pune district is the bastion of the Pawar family. The BJP is going solo in the two corporations, while the Shiv Sena (UBT)-MNS will contest the elections together. In Nagpur, which is the stronghold of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, the BJP will have an alliance with the Shiv Sena, while the NCP will contest the elections on its own, as will the Congress. In the Vasai-Virar suburbs of Mumbai, the BJP-Shiv Sena grouping has decided to contest together and take on the Hitendra Thakur-led Bahujan Vikas Aghadi. The Shiv Sena (UBT) is expected to go solo, while the Congress and the MNS will have an alliance with the BVA. In Nashik, the MVA is putting up a united front against the BJP, which is going solo, while the Shiv Sena-NCP have joined hands. In Malegaon, the Maha Yuti parties will contest together, while the Congress and the Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM will contest on their own. The SP and the VBA have allied, as have the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the MNS. In Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, the Congress and the NCP (SP) will be contesting together to take on the BJP, while the two Shiv Senas are contesting independently.

NHAI scraps KYV for car users from February 1

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on Thursday said it had decided to discontinue the mandatory Know Your Vehicle (KYV) process for all new car, jeep, and van FASTag issuances from February 1. This reform will bring significant relief to lakhs of common road users facing inconvenience and delays after FASTag activation due to requirements, said the NHAI in a

statement. For FASTags already issued to cars, KYV will no longer be mandatory, it added. The authority said KYV would be required only in specific cases where complaints were received, such as issues related to loose FASTags, incorrect issuance, or misuse. In the absence of any complaint, no KYV would be required for existing car FASTags, it asserted. Alongside this change, the authority said it had strengthened pre-activation verifica-



tion checks to make the process more reliable. FASTag activation will now be allowed only after vehicle details were verified through the VAHAN database, it added. The earlier option of validating details after activation has been removed. In cases where vehicle details are not available on VAHAN, banks must verify the information using the Registration Certificate (RC) and will bear full responsibility for the verification. This requirement will also apply to FASTags sold online, which will be activated only after proper validation by issuing banks.

Freedom and its limits in the Indian Constitution

Freedom in all its manifestations is one of the most important ideals cherished by society in a democratic nation. Article 19 of the Indian Constitution guarantees six freedoms: Freedom of speech, Freedom of expression, Freedom of assembly without arms, Freedom of association, Freedom to practise any profession, Freedom to reside in any part of the country. Some of these rights are subject to certain conditions of state security, public morality and decency and friendly relations with foreign countries. This means that the State has the right to impose reasonable restrictions on them.

Freedom of speech

Article 19 (1) (a) guarantees freedom of speech and expression to every person of India.

However, the State can impose restrictions on the freedom of speech and expression in the interests of the integrity, security and sovereignty of the country, friendly relations with foreign nations, for public order, with respect to defamation, incitement to offence or contempt of court.

Advocates of free speech have been propagating its importance long before it became a part of the Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution.

British philosopher and political economist John Stuart Mill in his 1859 essay "On Liberty," argued that without free speech we cannot criticise unfair government laws...Free speech helps us discern what is right...Free speech is necessary for the discovery of truth.

Mahatma Gandhi considered free speech, a liberal press and freedom of association vital for a nation's survival and the core of Swaraj or self-rule.

He believed that the press should be able to comment fiercely on matters... freedom of speech was fundamental to individual liberty and national progress.

We have a constitutionally protected right to free speech and expression but



there are always exceptions as long as they are reasonable.

In 1947, the Draft Committee of the Constitution had proposed the protection of an absolute freedom of speech and expression and assembly. At the time the communal situation in the country was very dangerous.

There were riots in Punjab and North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and unrest in Assam and Bengal. Ambedkar expressed his apprehension whether it is the best idea to have absolute freedom of speech and expression.

There was a need to protect the right to freedom of speech and expression under our constitution, subject to "public order, morality, and to state and national security" and prevent any speech which promotes class hatred and community hatred, as well as "scandalous, obscene and rebellious matters".

Amendments

An amendment to introduce the word "reasonable" before these restrictions suggested by the Drafting Committee. This was intended to put the soul back to Article 19.

Finally, we have, "Nothing shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it relates to or prevents the state from making any law relating to, libel, slander, defamation, contempt of court or any matter which offends against decency or morality or which undermines the security of or tends to overthrow the state."

By a quirk of history, the word "reason-

able" was left out in the finally drafted provision of Article 19 (1) (a). But Nehru got it back. He felt that 19(1)(a) needed to be amended to hold the country together to ensure law and order.

A select committee was formed which decided to introduce the terms "in the interests of public order" and "friendly relations with states" in the list of exceptions to 19(1)(a). They also introduced the word "reasonable" before the term 'restriction'.

The State also guarantees freedom to assemble peacefully without arms. However, reasonable restrictions are in the interests of sovereignty and integrity of the country and public order. For instance, processions may cause traffic jams and public inconvenience and calls for certain restrictions.

Freedom to form associations

While there is freedom to form associations, unions and co-operative societies, the state can impose restrictions for public order, with respect to defamation, incitement to offence or contempt of court.

This freedom gives freedom to form trade unions which is a fundamental right. However, police forces, armed forces and intelligence bureaus are prohibited from forming trade unions.

A citizen of India can move freely throughout the Indian territory but this right too has a reasonable restriction on the grounds of security, public order or protecting the interests of scheduled tribes.

Similarly, the citizens of India have the right to reside in any part of the country subject to certain restrictions.

All citizens have the right to carry on any trade or profession or occupation, provided the trade or occupation is not illegal or immoral.

Besides, the law does not prevent the state from making laws related to technical or professional qualifications required for practicing the occupation or trade.

NY RUSH



Vehicles stuck in a traffic jam amid rush on the first day of the year 2026, at JP Ganga Path in Patna on Thursday. PTI PHOTO

'Unacceptable': Cong flags EU carbon tax on Indian exporters

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Congress on Thursday called the carbon tax imposed by the European Union on Indian exports of steel and aluminium "unacceptable" and asked the Modi government to keep this non-tariff barrier in mind while finalising the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Congress General Secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh said that the much-awaited India-EU FTA will reportedly be finalised later this month. Beginning Thursday, he said, Indian steel and aluminium exporters to the 27-nation European Union will have to pay a carbon tax under the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

"In FY 2024-25, our exports of steel and aluminium to the EU averaged USD 5.8 billion — having already fallen from USD 7 billion in the previous year as EU importers began preparing for the introduction of the CBAM," he said. Citing the think-tank GTRI's estimate, he said many Indian exporters may have to cut prices by 15-22% so that their EU importers can use that margin to pay the carbon tax. "In addition, the documentation requirements call for meticulous accounting for and reporting of carbon emissions that are adding further costs to Indian exporters. Any India-EU FTA that does get finally signed must account for this unacceptable non-tariff barrier," he said on 'X'.

TN assembly polls: Battle lines drawn for three-cornered fight

'X' factor Vijay likely to dent vote bank of both Dravidian majors

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

2026 will be a watershed year for Tamil Nadu as the April-May assembly elections will test whether the two dominant forces, DMK and AIADMK, continue to hold sway over the masses or there is an emergence of a third force in actor Vijay. As things stand, the election promises to be an intense three-cornered political pot-boiler with the DMK, AIADMK, and Vijay's TVK, locking horns. Vijay is the latest from the film industry to test the waters in politics. While M G Ramachandran, and J Jayalalithaa achieved phenomenal success, Sivaji Ganesan and Kamal Hassan failed miserably, and Vijayakanth did alter the bipolar politics for a brief period but could not sustain it.



Supporters during TVK chief Vijay's public meeting in Puducherry recently. PTI FILE

Even if Vijay may not be able to recreate the MGR magic in his debut elections, given the fragmented polity, he is likely to make a bigger impact than Vijayakanth, who secured 8.5% votes in his first elections. Political parties are taking Vijay seriously — not just because of the cult status he enjoys among his fans — but also due to 'internal surveys' showing his party with more than 15% vote share. Both the DMK and AIADMK are facing challenges in giving final shape to their alliances with constituents, ramping up demands for more seats and even a share of power. For the DMK, the troubles are just beginning. Anti-incumbency against the government

is building, with the party's key vote bank — government employees — ready to take to the streets demanding fulfillment of poll promises. A section of Congress wants to ally with Vijay and this threatens the Secular Progressive Alliance, which has won every election since 2019. AIADMK and BJP are scrambling to rally all anti-DMK parties to their side as they vie to hog the media limelight with Vijay framing the 2026 contest as DMK versus TVK, eyeing a chunk of anti-government and anti-DMK votes. The 2026 elections are extremely crucial for the AIADMK as the party has never won

an election since Jayalalithaa's death in 2016 and the NDA continues to face criticism for failing to create a strong narrative against the ruling regime. Vijay seems to be the X factor and looks poised to dent the vote banks of both Dravidian majors. If OPS and TTV join the TVK-led alliance, they are likely to further strengthen Vijay's hands since they can get a chunk of the dominant Mukulathur voters in southern and central TN. Senior journalist R Bhagwan Singh told *DH* that Vijay has emerged as the biggest challenger to the Dravidian parties. "It looks like he will be plucking votes from every side. He is starting off not as a dark horse but as a white Arabian stallion. If Vijayakanth was a wind and shower, Vijay seems to be a storm," he said. Singh said the situation would turn topsy-turvy if Vijay joins the NDA and takes on the DMK alliance, which will be weighed down by anti-incumbency. "If all anti-DMK forces join hands, then it looks like the game is over for the ruling party. Vijay's support base might increase in the coming months as people might fall for his rhetoric that he left acting to serve them," Singh added.

Supporters of Cong MLA Bharath Reddy & Janardhana Reddy clash over banner

BALLARI, DHNS

A clash broke out between the supporters of Congress legislator N Bharath Reddy and the supporters of BJP leader and Gangavathi MLA G Janardhana Reddy over putting up banners in front of the latter's house here on Thursday.

In the melee, Bharath Reddy's aides reportedly opened fire in the air. It all started when the supporters of Bharath Reddy, led by his aide Satish Reddy, tried to erect banners for the proposed event to install Valmiki statue, in front of the residence of Janardhana Reddy.

Tension flared, when BJP leader B Sriramulu and supporters of Janardhana Reddy raised objections to putting up banners. Both the groups started pelting stones at each other. On seeing Janardhana Reddy at the spot, Satish Reddy opened fire in the air. Several people reportedly suffered injuries in the group clash. However, there is no official confirmation on the number of people injured in the incident. Moments later, more

Bellary legislator's aide opens fire in air, BJP leader cries conspiracy

than a thousand supporters of Bharath Reddy, wielding sticks, logs and stones, marched from SP Circle to Janardhana Reddy's residence. They attacked and vandalised the BJP leader's house. The police intervened and opened the fire in the air to disperse the mob. Following the group clash, Janardhana Reddy told the reporters, "It was a conspiracy to kill me. When I visited the spot, there was an attempt to shoot me. Bharath Reddy has not done any development in the constituency. There is a strong anti-incumbency wave against the Congress MLA. He is indulging in vote bank politics by installing a statue of Valmiki. When Sriramulu tried to stop Bharath Reddy's supporters from putting up banners in front of my house, they started throwing stones. The law and order has completely collapsed under the Congress government," he charged.



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ಮರು ಬೆಂದರ್ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಕಾಸಬ/ತಾಂತ್/ಮರು ಬೆಂದರ್/2025-26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:30/12/2025
ಈ ಕಛೇರಿ ಬೆಂದರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 13/2025-26, ದಿನಾಂಕ: 06/11/2025, ರಲ್ಲಿ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದ ಇಂದರ್ಲಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: MI/2025-26/DA/WORK INDENT8175 ಮತ್ತು MI/2025-26/DA/WORK INDENT8187 ಬೆಂದರ್ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬೆಂದರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಕೊಂಡಿರದೇ ಇರುವುದರಿಂದ ಮರು ಬೆಂದರ್ ಕೆರೆಯಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ ಉಳಿದ ಫರ್ಮ್‌ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಬದಲಾವಣೆ ಇರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ ಬೆಂದರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕ 09/01/2026 ಸಂಜೆ 4.30 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ ಬೆಂದರ್ ಕೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 12/01/2026 ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ (ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾದಲ್ಲಿ). ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಈ ಕಛೇರಿಯ ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ - 08156-295427 ಮತ್ತು ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಸಹಾಯವಾಣಿ ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 91-8068948777 ಮತ್ತು 91-8046010000 ರಿಂದ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.
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ಮಂಡ್ಯ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನಗಳ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ
ಮಂಡ್ಯ- 571401
(Autonomous Medical Institution, Government of Karnataka)
Fax & Phone No: 08232-231003, 222086, E-mail: mimmsandya@gmail.com,
Website: www.mimmsandya.org

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಮಿಮ್/ಸರಬ-1 ಬ್ಲಾಕ್ ಪ್ರಾಂತ್ಯ/ಸುವರ್ಣ/ಇ-ಪಿಂ/03/2025-26 (ಕಾರ್-2) ದಿ: 24.12.2025
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MHA DATA: Bangladesh border tops cases; no incidents on India-China frontier

25k ‘infiltrators’ caught at borders in 11 years

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

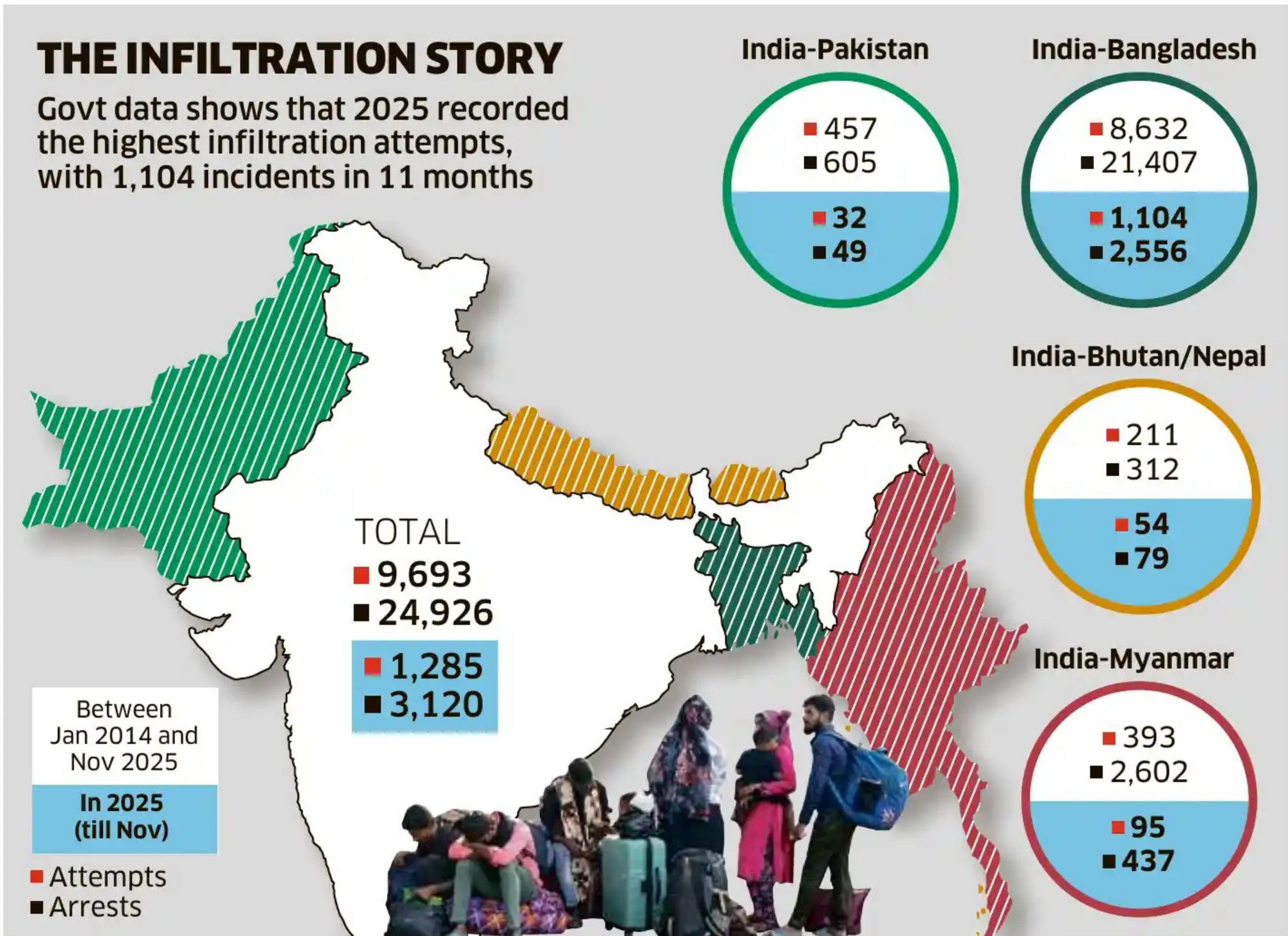
Around 25,000 “infiltrators” were arrested in close to 9,700 infiltration attempts along India’s borders with Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal between 2014 and November 2025, but not a single case was reported from the India-China border during this period, according to official statistics.

Data from the Ministry of Home Affairs showed that the India-Bangladesh border accounted for the highest number of incidents, with 8,632 infiltration attempts and 21,407 arrests since January 2014.

On the India-Pakistan border, 457 infiltration attempts were foiled, leading to 605 arrests. Along the India-Myanmar border, 2,602 people were arrested in 393 instances of infiltration attempts. The borders with Bhutan and Nepal saw 211 incidents, in which 312 people were arrested.

Altogether, there were 24,926 infiltration attempts during the period, with a total of 9,693 people being arrested.

Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai told the Lok Sabha last month that 93.25%, or 2,135.13 km, of the 2,289.66 km-long international border between India and Pakistan



has been fenced, while 154.52 km remain unfenced. However, 20.92%, or 856.77 km, of the 3,239.92 km-long India-Bangladesh border is still unfenced. Only 9.21 km of the 1,643-km Indo-Myanmar border has fencing.

The data showed that infiltration bids were the highest last year compared to previous years, as 1,104 instances were detected in the first 11 months of 2025 alone, compared to 977

in 2024 and 746 in 2023. Over the past 11 years, there have been 8,632 attempts, leading to 21,407 arrests.

Thirty-two infiltration attempts were recorded up to November 2025 on the India-Pakistan border, compared to 41 for the whole of 2024. Altogether, there were 457 cases, in which 605 people were arrested over the past 11 years.

The India-Myanmar border also saw an increase in

infiltration attempts in 2025, reporting 95 incidents until November, compared to 37 in 2024 and 40 in 2023. There have been 393 incidents and 437 arrests since 2014.

On India’s borders with Nepal and Bhutan, there were 78 instances in 2025, more than double the 23 in 2024. There were 211 infiltration attempts on India’s borders with the two countries, in which 312 people were arrested in 11 years.

Assam to fast-track expulsion of illegal migrants

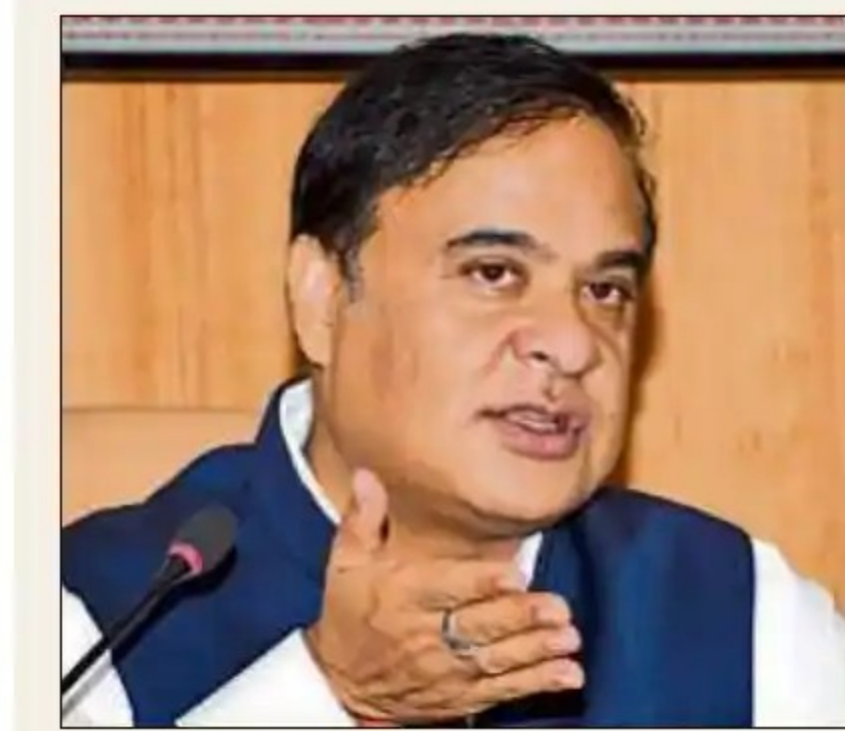
SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

In a move it believes will give a “new direction” in addressing Assam’s longstanding problem of foreigners, the BJP-led state government has decided to expel persons declared foreigners by the Foreigner Tribunal within a week.

“In the last three months, our government has pushed back nearly 2,000 illegal migrants to Bangladesh. Now, we have decided that those declared foreigners by the tribunals will be expelled within a week. This is going to give a new direction to the way declared foreigners are dealt with,” Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told reporters in Guwahati on New Year’s Day.

Sarma said the move would hasten the process and avoid delays caused when declared foreigners approach the high court or the Supreme Court. The apex court recently upheld the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, which lets district commissioners expel declared foreigners.

“Earlier, many spoke of the need for a bilateral treaty with



Himanta Biswa Sarma

PUSHBACK

- Expulsion policy adds fresh dimension to Assam’s foreigners’ issue
- Move aims to avoid delays from high court and SC appeals
- Announcement comes days after Home Minister Amit Shah said NDA govt would expel “infiltrators”
- CM Sarma says nearly 2,000 ‘pushed back’ to Bangladesh in 3 months

Bangladesh to send illegal migrants back. But such a treaty is not required for their expulsion,” Sarma said.

His announcement came just days after Union Home Minister Amit Shah said at

a public meeting in Assam that the Central government would identify and expel “infiltrators” across India.

Foreigner Tribunals are quasi-judicial bodies set up under the Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Foreigners (Tribunal) Order, 1964, to hear cases against people suspected of being illegal migrants in Assam. Those unable to prove Indian citizenship, with March 24, 1971, as the cut-off date, are declared foreigners and lodged in detention centres until their expulsion.

The cut-off was fixed exclusively for Assam under the 1985 Assam Accord, which followed the six-year-long anti-foreigners’ movement known as the Assam Agitation. Declared foreigners can challenge tribunal orders in the high court and the Supreme Court.

However, the recent decision to expel them within a week of the tribunal’s order, in the run-up to the Assembly elections, is likely to add a dimension to Assam’s longstanding foreigners issue, which takes centre stage every poll season.

Contaminated water caused Indore outbreak: Lab report

INDORE, PTI: A laboratory test has confirmed that a vomiting-diarrhoea outbreak, which has killed at least four patients and affected over 1,400 people in Indore, was caused by contaminated drinking water, officials said on Thursday.

The findings of the test report substantiated that a life-threatening drinking water supply system prevails in Madhya Pradesh’s commercial capital, ranked as India’s cleanest city for the last eight years.

Indore’s Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) Dr Madhav Prasad Hasani told reporters that a laboratory report prepared by a city-based medical college confirmed drinking water was contaminated due to a leakage in a pipeline in the Bhagirathpura area, from where the outbreak has been reported.

He did not share the detailed findings of the test report.

A health department official said during a survey of 1,714 households in Bhagirathpura on Thursday, 8,571 people were examined.

Of them, 338 people showing mild symptoms of vomiting-diarrhoea were given primary treatment at their homes.

Currently, 201 patients are admitted to hospitals, including 32 in intensive care units (ICUs).



Gold & diamond jewellery worth Rs 8.80 cr recovered during an ED raid at a house in New Delhi as part of a money laundering probe linked to Haryana-based absconding criminal Inderjit Singh Yadav, PTI

NE Monsoon ends with 3% deficit in TN

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

For the first time in six years, the Northeast Monsoon (NEM), Tamil Nadu’s lifeline, ended with a 3% deficit rainfall on December 31, 2025, despite Cyclone Ditwah dumping huge amounts of rainfall across the state.

While Chennai, which experienced above-normal NEM for five years, also recorded deficit rainfall this season, Tirunelveli in southern Tamil Nadu recorded a remarkable 95% increase.

2026 began on a pleasant note for residents of Chennai and its neighbouring districts, with rains due to a weak cyclonic circulation over the Equatorial waters. Southern TN and the Delta region might get moderate rains for the next few days, even as the nighttime temperature is likely to remain slightly warmer than the past couple of weeks due to cloudy skies and rains.

The actual rainfall recorded between October 1 and December 31 is 428.9 mm, against the normal rainfall of 442.8 mm. “The departure is minus 3%,” the IMD said on Thursday, with

experts saying that this is the first time since 2018 that the NEM has ended on a negative note.

With this, 2025 has become the 10th year since the start of the millennium to see the NEM not end on a positive note. Tamil Nadu relies heavily on NEM for rainfall, receiving about 48% of its annual rain, making it the primary rainy season.

The NEM took off to a blistering start in October, around the time of Deepavali, dumping rains across the state, but went on a break in November and made a comeback in December.

Independent weather blogger Pradeep John said 2025 has been an unusual year with an abnormally high number of dry days, with November and December alone recording nearly 40 such days, which is significantly above normal for the NEM.

Thanks to the South West monsoon rains and a “great October”, most of the lakes in Tamil Nadu are brimming, he said, adding that southern districts like Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, and Virudhunagar got good rains this season.

Central India braces for more chill; extra cold-wave days forecast near B’luru

IMD predicts less rainfall in the northwest

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

An area near Bengaluru in south interior Karnataka is the only location in peninsular India that may experience additional cold-wave days in January, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), which has predicted such extra cold-wave days for large parts of central India.

IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the area near Bengaluru, as shown in the cold wave outlook for January 2026, might be an “isolated” case where markedly below-normal temperature could occur for a few additional days in parts of south interior Karnataka.

The Vidarbha and Marathwada regions of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh,

COLDER JANUARY

- Isolated chill near Bengaluru – Only peninsular India location flagged for extra cold-wave days in January
- Vidarbha, Marathwada, MP, east UP and Bihar to see 1-3 additional cold-wave days
- Monthly max and min temperatures to stay below normal across most regions

eastern Uttar Pradesh and adjoining areas of Bihar will experience 1-3 additional cold wave days this month. This is above the average number of cold-wave days these regions are expected to experience in the normal course of time.

Monthly maximum and minimum temperatures will remain “below normal” in most parts of the country. For the next few days, cold wave conditions are likely in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh and Rajasthan.

The January-March av-



A woman wraps a child in warm clothes on a cold winter day in Gurugram on Thursday, PTI

erage rainfall for northwest India will be “below normal”, with the region likely to receive less than 86% of its average rainfall. Most parts of peninsular and northeastern India will also see below-normal rainfall.

Mohapatra said the decline in winter rains in northwest India is due to a trend of fewer Western Disturbances — storms originating in the Mediterranean Sea — influencing the region’s weather.

“Though 5-7 Western Disturbances are formed every

month, they are either weak or pass over India quickly without impacting the weather much. The WD-induced rain and snowfall activities are decreasing,” he said.

In January, Uttarakhand, Punjab, half of Himachal Pradesh, large tracts of Uttar Pradesh and Ladakh are expected to get poor rainfall.

An analysis of last year’s weather trends showed that over 2,700 Indians died due to extreme weather events; nearly 48% were killed by lightning.

Kerala’s pro-liquor push draws flak amid record NY sales

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

The CPM-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala is facing criticism for its recent pro-liquor measures, which raise questions about its stated abstinence policy.

The latest moves include permitting bars to remain open until midnight on December 31 for New Year’s Eve celebrations and launching a contest to name a brandy being introduced by a state-run agency.

When the LDF came to power in 2016, Kerala had only 29 bars. Now, it stands at 804.

Bars are usually allowed to operate until 11 pm, but following requests from bar owners, the government extended the closing time to midnight on December 31. The move has raised concerns among anti-liquor activists, who fear it could set a precedent for similar relaxations during other festival seasons like Onam.

Meanwhile, the Kerala State Beverages Corporation (KSBC) launched a contest to suggest a name and logo for a brandy to be produced at one of its distilleries.

Anti-liquor forums, includ-

SPIRIT SURGE

- Kerala’s liquor policy under LDF draws scrutiny
- Criticism as govt permits bars till midnight, launches brandy contest
- Activists fear relaxations could extend to festivals like Onam
- Abstinence policy questioned as bars multiply from 29 to 804

ing the temperance commission of the Kerala Catholic Bishops’ Council, criticised the government for steps that promote alcohol.

Excise Minister MB Rajesh later clarified that the state government had no role in the corporation’s decision to hold the contest.

Liquor worth Rs 125.6 crore was sold in Kerala on December 31, marking a 15.5% increase over sales on the same day in 2024. The total volume of sales on New Year’s Eve stood at 2.07 lakh cases, 12.5% higher than last year’s figure.

The Congress government led by Oommen Chandy (2011-16) had restricted bars to five-star hotels under its phased prohibition policy, reducing their number from around 700 to just 29.

‘Baba’ remark highlights rift between UP CM & his deputy

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

A seemingly innocuous remark by Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya during a routine inspection of the preparations for the forthcoming “Magh Mela”, an annual Hindu pilgrimage in January and February, has got the tongues wagging within the BJP because it shed light on the fissures between him and CM Yogi Adityanath.

Interestingly, at the centre of the remarks was Santosh Das, a seer popularly known as “Satua Baba”, who is considered to be very close to Adityanath.

Maurya, who was reviewing the Magh Mela preparations, expressed displeasure over the slow pace of the preparations and asked the Prayagraj district magistrate to pay attention to them rather than wasting time in preparing “chapatis” for Satua Baba. “Don’t waste time in making chapatis for Satua Baba... Look after the arrangements,” Maurya told the District Magistrate Manish Verma.

Maurya’s remarks came after a video showing Verma making “chapatis” in the ashram of Satua Baba went viral on social media.

Though Maurya’s remarks evoked laughter among those present there, the sarcasm was not lost on the political analysts, who sought to portray them as a signal that all was still not well between the two leaders. Differences between the two came to the fore soon after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, in which the BJP suffered a setback in UP, losing 29 seats to rivals.

Unnao rape case survivor alleges smear campaign

UNNAO (UP), PTI: The Unnao rape survivor has made an emotional appeal on social media seeking wider public support, disregarding caste barriers while claiming that she and her husband have been facing a smear campaign on the Internet recently.

This came days after the daughter of expelled BJP leader and a convict in the case, Kuldeep Sengar, claimed on X that her father was innocent and sought public support.

In a recent video message, the survivor claimed that she and her husband had been subjected to a smear campaign on social media over the past two days by people identifying themselves as Sengar’s supporters.

She also alleged that a post was being circulated online claiming that a “Kshatriya conference” in support of Sengar has been called at Jantar Mantar on January 11 by his daughters. “I am also a daughter of the Kshatriya community. I am also a daughter of this country. Please become my voice. A criminal has no caste,” the survivor said.

SIR: Bengal CEO orders inclusion of vulnerable groups

KOLKATA, PTI: The office of the West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer has issued detailed instructions to all district election officers to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups in the electoral rolls during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), a notification said.

The advisory focuses on facilitating enrolment of eligible voters from vulnerable sections — such as sex workers. Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups and ashram inmates — who often struggle to produce conventional documents.

It mandates that when such individuals cannot establish linkage with the 2002 electoral rolls for valid reasons, the concerned DEO must conduct personal visits to the area or institution, hold a public hearing or enquiry, record statements and collect relevant evidence.

SAFER WORKPLACE

Proposal to seek consent from women to work at night

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Employers assigning night duty to women may have to take their written consent and provide transportation for pick-up and drop once new Labour Codes rules are implemented.

The draft rules also have provisions for fixing minimum wages, defining work hours, and defining different types of workers.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment on Wednesday notified

draft rules for the Code, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHW) Code, Code on Social Security and Industrial Relations Code, seeking suggestions from the public.

The ministry has given stakeholders 30 days to provide feedback on the Industrial Relations Code, and the public 45 days for feedback on the remaining codes. The publishing of rules is necessary to make the new codes fully operational.

According to the draft OSHW

Code rules, those assigning work for women between 7 pm and 6 am should obtain their written consent. No woman shall be employed against the maternity benefit provisions under the Social Security Code, 2020.

Adequate transportation should be provided to women employees. The draft rules also said the workplace — including passage towards conveniences or facilities concerning toilets, washrooms, drinking water, entry and exit of women employees — should be well-lit.

Washrooms and drinking facilities should also be near the workplace, and suitable provisions of CCTV surveillance should be provided.

Safe, secure, and healthy working conditions are provided so no woman is disadvantaged in connection with her employment. Dedicated telephone numbers should be displayed at conspicuous places both at the establishment and inside the vehicles, so that any woman employee can utilise them in case of any exigency or emergency.

Army seizes bag carrying ammo ‘dropped by drone’ in Poonch

POONCH/JAMMU, PTI: The Army on Thursday recovered a consignment suspected to have been dropped by a drone along the India-Pakistan border in Jammu and Kashmir’s Poonch district, recovering 70 rounds of ammunition and a suspected improvised explosive device, officials said.

According to them, the consignment was dropped early in the morning in an area between Rangar Nallah and the Poonch River in the Chakkan da Bagh belt of Khari village.

During the inspection, Army personnel found a bag containing 70 rounds of ammunition and a yellow tiffin-box that is suspected to contain about two kilograms of IED, officials said.

The Bomb Disposal Squad was called to the spot, and they later defused the IED through a controlled explosion, the officials said.

AI pilot offloaded from Vancouver flight over ‘fitness’ concern

MUMBAI, PTI: Air India on Thursday said one of its pilots has been grounded after being stopped from operating a Vancouver-Delhi flight on December 23, following concerns raised by the Canadian authorities over his “fitness” for duty.

The pilot was deplaned just prior to the departure of the airline’s Delhi flight from Vancouver, Air India said in a statement. “Flight AI186 from Vancouver to Delhi on December 23, 2025, experienced a last-minute delay after one of the cockpit crew members was offloaded prior to departure,” it said.

Canadian authorities raised concerns about the pilot’s “fitness for duty”, following which the crew member was taken for further inquiry, the airline stated.

An alternate pilot was rostered to operate the flight, resulting in the delay, Air India said.

Kashmir’s vanishing springs signal a growing crisis

Once the only water source for many J&K homes, these waterbodies are drying up

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Long before taps and pipelines reached Kashmir’s villages, natural springs — known locally as “nags” — were the lifeblood of the Valley. From Verinag and Kokernag in South Kashmir to Sukhnag in central Kashmir, these springs supplied clean, cold water to households, farms, and settlements for centuries. Entire communities in districts like Anantnag and Kulgam thrived on this free, perennial water source. Some were even said to have medicinal qualities.

Ghulam Ahmad, a 68-year-old farmer from Verinag, recalled, “There was no concept of water scarcity. If a spring slowed down, the village would clean its channel and protect the surrounding land.”

Today, many of these springs are drying up, signalling an environmental crisis

across Kashmir.

The decline began in the 1970s and 1980s, when the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department expanded piped-water networks. “As dependence on springs decreased, maintenance stopped, and their natural recharge zones were left exposed. Roads, concrete houses, and commercial buildings replaced fields and wetlands that once absorbed rain and snowmelt,” Ahmad lamented.

In Anantnag and Kulgam, springs that once fed streams now run dry by late summer. Pulwama and Shopian have lost several entirely.

Residents say they now depend on tankers during dry

NEGLECTED LIFELINES

- For centuries, springs supplied clean, cold water to households, farms, and settlements
- People planned their homes and cultivated fields – and sometimes even established entire communities – around them
- “If a spring slowed down, the village would clean its channel and protect the surrounding land,” recalls a farmer
- However, as piped-water networks expanded, dependence on springs declined, and many were neglected
- Today, some communities that once relied on springs are forced to depend on water tankers during the dry months

months, with women walking longer distances to collect drinking water.

Farmers struggle to irrigate kitchen gardens and paddy

fields that once thrived on spring water. Ironically, piped water has not fully replaced springs, thanks to supply disruptions, ageing infrastruc-

ture, and power cuts.

Environmental experts cite unregulated groundwater extraction as a key factor. With an inconsistent piped-water supply, households increasingly rely on borewells, reducing the groundwater that naturally feeds springs. Climate change compounds the stress: Warmer winters, reduced snowfall, and erratic rainfall mean slower aquifer recharge.

Since 1980, average temperatures in Kashmir have risen by 0.8° C, glaciers have shrunk up to 15%, and rainfall has been consistently below normal in recent years.

Mining and deforestation further disrupted the Valley’s hydrology. Rivers and springs

face sedimentation, contamination, and altered drainage patterns. “Cement and limestone mining have long-term effects, including landslides and reduced groundwater recharge,” explained Dr Sarah Qazi, a hydrogeologist at Kashmir University.

Yet, efforts to revive springs are emerging. Environmentalist Manzoor Wagnoo’s Ehsaas campaign has restored four Ganderbal springs and is working to rejuvenate Srinagar’s Amda Kadal Spring.

Government initiatives like the Jal Jeevan Mission and Springshed Rejuvenation aim to secure Himalayan water sources, though large-scale revival remains slow.

India’s first bullet train in August 2027

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India’s first bullet train is set to become operational on August 15, 2027, said Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday.

“On Independence Day 2027, people will be able to buy a ticket for India’s first bullet train,” he said, underscoring the symbolic importance of the launch date.

The Surat-Bilimora stretch in the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) corridor will be operational in the first phase.

Major civil works and track-

RAIL-WATCH

- Surat-Bilimora stretch along Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail corridor to be operational in first phase
- Major civil works and track-bed preparation completed along 47-km stretch
- Of the total 508 km, around 352 km lies in Gujarat and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, while 156 km is in Maharashtra
- Entire stretch will be operational in phases as works are completed

bed preparation have been completed along the 47-km stretch, paving the way for early operations.

The 508-km Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor passes through Gujarat, Dadra

and Nagar Haveli, and Maharashtra.

Of the total alignment, around 352 km lies in Gujarat and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, while 156 km is in Maharashtra. The entire stretch will be

operational in phases as works are completed.

Data shared by the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Ltd show that more than 85% of the corridor is being built on elevated viaducts, a design aimed at minimising land acquisition and improving safety.

Over 326 km of elevated structures has already been completed, while 17 of the 25 planned river bridges are in place.

Once fully operational, the line will connect key economic and industrial hubs such as Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Bharuch, Surat, Vapi, Thane, and Mumbai.

India, Pak share lists of nuke facilities, prisoners

NEW DELHI, DHNS: India and Pakistan on Thursday exchanged the lists of each other’s nuclear installations and facilities covered under a 1988 agreement, which survived the 1999 Kargil War as well as the 2025 cross-border military flare-up.

New Delhi and Islamabad also exchanged the lists of fishermen and other civilian prisoners lodged in each other’s prisons.

The exchange of the lists of nuclear installations and facilities, covered under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities, took

place simultaneously in New Delhi and Islamabad, according to the Ministry of External Affairs. The exchange on Thursday was the 35th consecutive exchange of such lists between the two countries, the first one having taken place on January 1, 1992.

Though the Pahalgam terror attack by the terrorists owing allegiance to the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyiba resulted in a cross-border military flare-up from May 7 to 10, the two sides stuck to the agreement and shared the lists on Thursday.

New Delhi has shared with Islamabad a list of 33 Pakistani

or believed-to-be Pakistani fishermen and 391 other civilian prisoners, currently lodged in Indian prisons, while Islamabad shared a similar list of 199 fishermen prisoners and 58 other civilian prisoners.

New Delhi has called for the early release and repatriation of civilian prisoners, fishermen along with their boats, and missing Indian defence personnel from Pakistan’s custody. Pakistan has been asked to expedite the release and repatriation of 167 Indian fishermen and civilian prisoners, who have completed their sentence, Ministry of External Affairs stated.

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER - 2nd call
(only through KPP-Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Contractors for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (UWP), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bangalore-560009.

Sl. No	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to Tender EMD Amount	Last date & Time for Submission of Tender	Date & Time for Opening of Tender
1.	(WWW-P H & AV)	BWSSB/EE(WWM-P)H&AV/AEE (WWW-P-H&AV)-2/AE/1599/2025-26 Date: 31.12.2025	Rs. 32,10,442/- Rs. 64,210/-	09.01.2026 upto 5:00 pm.	12.01.2026 after 11:00 am.
2.		BWSSB/EE(WWM-P)H&AV/AEE (WWW-P-H&AV)-2/AE/1601/2025-26 Date: 31.12.2025	Rs. 57,25,688/- Rs. 1,14,600/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (WWW-P-H & AV)

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> For further details contact the abovesigned office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/4769/SSC/2025-26

BEFORE THE HON'BLE KARNATAKA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION, #16C-1, MILLER TANK BED AREA, VASANTHANAGAR, BENGALURU - 560 052.

IN THE MATTER OF:

Application under Section 62 and 64 of The Electricity Act, 2003 read with KERC (Multi Year Transmission, Distribution and Retail Supply Tariff) Regulations, 2024 for approval of Annual Performance Review (APR) for FY 2024-25.

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Ltd (KPTCL)
Kaveri Bhavan, Bengaluru-560 009

..... Applicant

NOTIFICATION of APR FOR FY-25

1.0 In accordance with KERC (Multi Year Transmission, Distribution and Retail Supply Tariff) Regulations, 2024, the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL) has filed its Annual Performance Review (APR) for FY 2024-25, before KERC for approval. The application of KPTCL is under consideration of KERC.

2.0 In the APR application for FY 2024-25, KPTCL has sought revised Annual Revenue Requirement (ARR) of Rs.6504.08 Crore with a revenue surplus of Rs. 71.78 Crore. Approval is hereby sought for the adjustment of excess/surplus income during the financial year 2026–27.

3.0 In accordance with the provisions of Electricity Act 2003, KERC (Multi Year Transmission, Distribution and Retail Supply Tariff) Regulations, 2024, it is hereby notified that persons who are interested in filing their objections to the above applications may file the same with the **Receiving Officer, KERC, #16 C-1, MILLER TANK BED AREA, VASANTHANAGAR, Bengaluru-560 052** along with the documents which they want to rely upon, in six sets duly supported by an affidavit within **30 days** from the date of the first publication of this Notification.

4.0 For reference for those who are interested, copies of KPTCL's Annual Performance Review (APR) applications are available for inspection and for purchase at the following offices:

(1) **Office of the Chief Engineers (Electy), Transmission Zones, KPTCL, Bengaluru, Tumakuru, Hassan, Mysuru, Bagalkote and Kalaburagi.**

(2) **The Accounts Officer (Public Relations), Corporate Office, KPTCL, Ground Floor, Kaveri Bhavan, Bengaluru.**

(3) **Corporate Offices of Electricity Supply Companies (ESCOMs) situated at Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mangaluru, Hubballi and Kalaburagi.**

5.0 A full set of applications is made available to the interested people at the above offices on payment of Rs.111/- in Kannada version and Rs.108/- in English version for each set of APR application by cash or DD or they may also obtain required portion of the application, by paying photocopying charges @ Rs.1/- per page, **within 10 working days** from the date of first publication of the notification. These documents are also available on the website of **KPTCL <https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in>**

6.0 The objections have to be **filed with KERC only**. But as directed by KERC, in order to expedite the process of objection filing and replies thereon, the objectors are also requested to simultaneously send a copy of their objection directly to the **Managing Director, KPTCL, Corporate Office, Kaveri Bhavan, Bengaluru-560 009**. The last date for receipt of public objections is **30 days** from the date of first publication.

For Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (Sd/-)
Managing Director,
KPTCL, Kaveri Bhavan, Bengaluru-560 009

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
MINOR IRRIGATION & GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation & Ground Water Development Division,Hassan

IFT No.28/2025-26, Dated: 31.12.2025

Short term tenders are invited from eligible Agencies in two cover system through KPPP portal of GOK (website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>) for Hassan & Chikkamagaluru District works as per KW-3 maximum tender amount is Rs.128.87 lakhs & minimum tender amount is Rs.3.23 lakhs. The last date of receipt of tender is 08-01-2026 upto 5.00 PM hours. Further detail can be had from KPP-portal and the above office during office working hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, MI & GWD Division, Hassan.

ಹಾಸನದಲ್ಲ/ಹಿರಿಯ/ಹಾಸನದ/899/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಎಲ್/2025-26

Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited
(Wholly owned Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
(CIN - UO4010KA2002SGC030438)

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Portal Only)

BESCOM invites tender against Enquiry No. BESCOM/2025-26/IND0190 for Procurement of 11 kV, 400 Amps Double Break GOS. Bid Documents available from: 02.01.2026 onwards. Last date for Bid Submission: 02.02.2026, 17:00 Hrs. Opening of Bid Document: 03.02.2026, 17:15 Hrs. The Tender can be obtained through KPP portal web-site <http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. Aspiring Bidders need to register on KPP portal. Further Bidders can take assistance with KPP help desk contact numbers (+91-8046010000 +91-8068948777, 09240214000 & 09240214001) or email at support@eprochelpdesk.com

Sd/- Chief General Manager, Ele., Procurement, BESCOM, 4th Floor, K R Circle, Bengaluru-560001.

For electricity related complaints call 1912
Download BESCOM Mithra MOBILE APP

BENGALURU WEST CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Mahalakshimpuram Division, 12th Main, 11th Cross, West of chord road, Bengaluru. (Office Phone No: 080-23197031)

NO.EE/MLP/TEND/E-PROC/11/2025-26 Date : 01.01.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(TWO COVER SYSTEM) (Only Through KPP Portal)

The Executive Engineer, Mahalakshimpuram Division on behalf of the Commissioner, Bengaluru West City Corporation (BWCC) invites Request for Proposal from interested persons/firms those who have done similar type of work for Consultancy Services for Project Management including Supervision, Quality control (PMC) for the below works through e-Procurement system by the Executive Engineer, Mahalakshimpuram Division, BWCC, Zone-1. Tender documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka KPP Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

	Name of the Works/EMD amount in Rs.
1	Providing consultancy Services for the work "Comprehensive development of Arterial, Sub Arterial and Ward main roads and improvements to drains, footpath and other allied works in Mahalakshmi Layout Assembly Constituency Package-1". EMD amount: Rs.38,000/-.
2	Providing consultancy Services for the work "Comprehensive development of Ward roads improvements to drains and parks, repairs to park and playground lights in ward no-46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52 & 53 in Mahalakshmi Layout Assembly Constituency Package-2". EMD amount: Rs.32,000/-.

Calendar of events:

1. Tender Document may be downloaded through E-portal from : **05.01.2026.**

2. Pre-bid Meeting : **07-01-2026 15.30 hours**, Office of the Chief Engineer, RR Nagar Zone-1, Ideal Homes, Rajarajeswari Nagar Zone, Bengaluru-98.

3. Last Date & Time for receipt of Tenders : **13.01.2026 up to 4:00 PM.**

4. Opening of Technical bid : **14.01.2026 at 4:30 PM.**

5. Validity of Tender : **90 Days from last date of receipts of Tender**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Mahalakshimpuram Division, Bengaluru West City Corporation

CHAMUNDESHWARI ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Govt. of Karnataka Undertaking)
NOTIFICATION
BEFORE THE KARNATAKA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION, No.16, C-1, MILLERS TANK BED AREA, VASANTHANAGAR, BANGALORE-560052

No. CESC/GM(Com)/DGM(RA-1)/AGM(RA-1)/2025-26 /31516 Dated:01.01.2026

IN THE MATTER OF:

An application for Annual Performance Review for 2024-25 of Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (CESC), under Section 61 & 62 of the Electricity Act, 2003 read with relevant provisions of KERC (Tariff) Regulations, KERC (Terms & Conditions for Determination of Tariff for Distribution and Retail Sale of Electricity) Regulations, 2006 and KERC (Multi Year Transmission, Distribution and Retail Supply Tariff) Regulations, 2024.

Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (CESC),
No 29, Vijayanagar 2nd stage, Hinkal, Mysuru 570 017.

...PETITIONER

NOTICE

1. Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (CESC has filed an application before the Hon'ble Commission for Annual Performance Review for the financial year 2024-25 viz-a-viz the Annual Revenue Requirement for 2024-25 approved in Tariff Order-2024 dated 28.02.2024. The Hon'ble Commission is in the process of considering the same. The summary of the application is as below;

2. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW: Financial position of CESC in 2024-25 against the ARR approved by the Hon'ble Commission in the Tariff Order-2024 is indicated below;

Sl. No	Particulars	As approved by KERC in Tariff order 2024	CESC proposal for APR based on Annual Accounts
	Energy Sales (MU)	8428.82	8447.42
A.	INCOME (Rs.in Cr):		
	Revenue from sale of power	7205.8	7442.10
B	EXPENDITURE (Rs.in Cr):		
i.	Power Purchase cost including Tr. Charges	5632.78	5875.87
ii.	O & M Costs	1128.55	1223.41
iii.	Depreciation	289.62	213.88
iv.	Interest & Finance Charges	424.08	638.85
v.	Return on Equity	-	188.12
vi.	Other Debits	-	7.29
vii	Funds towards consumer contribution	0.5	0.13
viii	Less: Other income	121.87	177.20
	Total Expenditure (i to viii)	7353.66	7970.22
	APR surplus/Deficit of previous year	180.37	-
	Net Expenditure	7173.29	7970.22
C.	Net Surplus/(Deficit) (A-B)	32.51	-528.12

3. The Net Revenue Deficit of Rs.528.12 Crores may be passed on to the consumers, as may be decided by the Commission, in terms of MYT Regulations.

4. Pursuant to Section 5 of KERC (Tariff) Regulations, 2000 and read with relevant provisions of KERC (Tariff) Regulations, KERC (Terms & Conditions for Determination of Tariff for Distribution and Retail Sale of Electricity) Regulations, 2006 and KERC (Multi Year Transmission, Distribution and Retail Supply Tariff) Regulations, 2024, it is hereby notified that the persons who are interested in filing their objections to the above petition may file the same with the Receiving Officer, O/o the Secretary, Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, No.16, C-1, Millers Tank Bed Area, Vasanthanagar, Bangalore – 560 052, along with the documents on which they want to rely upon, in six sets, duly supported by an affidavit within thirty days from the date of first publication of this Tariff Notification and also indicate whether they want to be heard in person. A copy of the objection may be marked to the General manager (Commercial), Corporate office, CESC Mysuru No.29, Vijaynagar 2nd Stage, Hinkal, Mysuru-570017 for furnishing replies to the objections.

5. For reference of those who are interested, copies of the petition are available for inspection/sale at Zonal offices (Office of the Chief Engineer (Electy), all Circle Offices (Office of the Superintending Engineer (Ele), O&M), and General Manager (Commercial), Corporate office, CESC Mysuru No.29, Vijaynagar 2nd Stage, Hinkal, Mysuru-570017.

6. They may also obtain copies of the required portion of the petition by paying photocopying charges.

7. Further, full set of the petition together with supporting material will also be made available to the interested persons on payment of Rs. 250/- + 18% GST and the same is also available for sale at Zonal offices (Office of the Chief Engineer (Electy), all Circle Offices (Office of the Superintending Engineer (Ele), O&M), and General Manager (Commercial), Corporate office, CESC Mysuru No.29, Vijaynagar 2nd Stage, Hinkal, Mysuru-570017.

8. The soft copy of the APR petition can be viewed on the website of CESC (<https://cescmysore.karnataka.gov.in>)

Sd/-
For Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited
General Manager (Commercial), Corporate office, CESC Mysuru.

DIPR/MYSORE/12/SSC/2025-26



DECCAN HERALD

ESTABLISHED 1948

Delhi's new normal: Toxic air, weak policy

As air pollution rises in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR), the continuing and almost normalised absence of effective counter-action is pushing residents to see the public health emergency as an everyday reality. The air quality levels have varied between 'very poor' and 'severe', with no sign of relief. While the Supreme Court has delivered admonitions, advice, and directions to the government on petitions filed by citizens and civic organisations, it appears to have realised that the matter goes beyond court-decreed action. Calling measures taken so far a "total failure", the Court has told the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to prepare a comprehensive long-term strategy, focusing on issues such as urban mobility, industrial processes, energy use, and stubble burning. It said ad hoc and short-term responses cannot deliver any meaningful reduction in pollution levels.

The overall AQI value in Delhi on many recent days was over 400, more than four times the acceptable level. Between November and December, Delhi had 41 days with AQI levels above 300, in the 'very poor' category, and eight days when the index crossed 400. Poor air quality and dense fog disrupt road transport, train services, and flights almost every day. Many schools and offices have gone online. The wintry conditions prevent the dispersal of pollutants, aggravating the problem. Visibility has been reduced to just a few metres in many places. Children, senior citizens, and sick persons are particularly affected. The government has tried multiple measures, including cloud-seeding, deployment of anti-smog guns, and mist sprayers. Restrictions were imposed on the entry of vehicles, and enforcement measures were strengthened, with no significant results.

Protests were held to draw the authorities' attention to the crisis and demand stronger mitigation measures. Public protests on the issue of pollution are not common in the country. Some of them have become unruly, leading to the detention of the protesters. The Supreme Court is set to hear the matter next week when the CAQM is expected to place its revised roadmap on record. But that is only the long-term plan. The problem is also immediate. Unfortunately, the government continues to be in denial mode and, at times, takes negative positions. It has even made statements questioning the impact of air pollution on health and the applicability of the World Health Organisation (WHO) standards on pollution to India. Without acknowledgement of the problem, there cannot be a solution. But the suffering of the people is real, and it calls for informed and immediate steps towards lasting solutions.

Rising air pollution is being met with ineffective short-term responses and, at times, denial

Politics stalls promise of local governance

Mahatma Gandhi's vision of *gram swaraj* was unambiguous: villages governing themselves, politically empowered and financially independent, forming the foundation of Indian democracy. Decades later, that ideal rings hollow as gram panchayats across Karnataka enter the new year starved of funds. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, which came into force in 1993, sought to institutionalise Panchayati Raj and strengthen local self-governance by devolving power, responsibility, and resources to elected village bodies. Karnataka, in fact, was ahead of its time. As early as 1983, under Chief Minister Ramakrishna Hegde, the state adopted decentralisation with the promise that power would flow from *halli* (village) to Delhi. Today, the flow has reversed—Delhi controls the purse strings, while panchayats wait helplessly.

Karnataka's 6,000-odd gram panchayats are yet to receive a single rupee from the Centre under the 15th Finance Commission for the current financial year. Of the Rs 2,100 crore due, the first instalment of Rs 1,092 crore has not been released, despite the state fulfilling all stipulated conditions, including submission of gram panchayat development plans. That other states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal—often at loggerheads with the Centre—have received their grants only deepens the suspicion of discriminatory treatment. The consequences are devastating. Development works have stalled, payments remain frozen, and some panchayats lack funds even for drinking water supply. Technical glitches following the merger of regional rural banks and IFSC remapping issues have further compounded the problem. As a result, over 800 panchayats are unable to access even existing funds. These are bureaucratic failures for which villagers are paying the price.

The state government, however, cannot wash its hands of responsibility. Elections to taluk and district panchayats have not been held since 2022. With the term of gram panchayat members set to end this month, the absence of elected bodies provides the Centre a convenient pretext to withhold funds. Under the Finance Commission guidelines, grants can be released only to panchayats with elected bodies. Successive state governments have delayed local body elections, often because MLAs prefer development funds and decision-making to remain concentrated in their hands. Together, the Centre's financial strangulation and the state's political procrastination have hit at the very foundation of local self-governance. Panchayats today exist mostly on paper, stripped of authority, resources, and dignity. When villages are denied power and money, democracy stands weakened. *Gram swaraj* cannot survive on slogans alone; it requires timely elections, assured funds, and genuine political will. Until then, local governance will remain a constitutional promise deliberately betrayed.

Without central funds and elected bodies, Karnataka's panchayats battle a massive resource crunch

Workers without work: Why skills matter more than ever

Gaps in skill development and a slow shift to productive jobs place India's demographic advantage under strain

CHITRA SARUPARIA

India stands at a decisive moment in its economic journey. With one of the largest working-age populations in the world, the country is often described as enjoying a demographic dividend. Demographics alone do not create prosperity. Jobs do, and skills ultimately determine outcomes. A recent report, *India's Employment Prospects: Pathways to Jobs*, by the National Council of Applied Economic Research, highlights that India's labour-market challenge lies not in a shortage of people, but in the slow movement of workers from low-productivity activities into skilled, higher-value employment.

Over the past decade, pressure on India's labour market has steadily intensified. Between 2017 and 2024, close to 90 million people were added to the working-age population, while employment increased by only about 60 million. This gap of roughly five million jobs each year highlights a growing imbalance between labour supply and demand. Labour force participation remains around half of the working-age population, with women participating at significantly lower rates. These numbers point to a structural weakness in India's growth story, where output expansion has not translated into enough productive employment.

What makes the situation more concerning is the nature of jobs being created. A substantial share of recent employment growth has come from self-employment, particularly in agriculture and informal non-farm activities. For many workers, self-employment reflects economic compulsion rather than entrepreneurial choice. These activities are typically characterised by low capital intensity, limited technology adoption, and weak productivity. They provide subsistence but offer limited scope for income growth or skill accumulation. As a result, the transition from low-skilled to skilled employment has remained slow, constraining both wages and productivity.

This structural pattern has serious implications for India's economic future. Productivity growth is the foundation of sustained expansion, rising incomes, and global competitiveness. High-value sectors such as advanced manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, renewable energy, and modern services depend on workers with technical competence, adaptability, and problem-solving ability. When employment remains concentrated in low-skilled ac-

tivities, productivity growth weakens, and firms struggle to move up the value chain. India's ambition to sustain high growth and generate quality employment cannot be realised without a decisive improvement in workforce skills.

A central constraint lies in the persistent mismatch between education, skills, and labour market demand. Only a small proportion of the workforce has received formal vocational training, and where training exists, quality and relevance vary widely. Curricula often lag industry requirements, employer engagement in training remains limited, and certification does not consistently signal job readiness. This disconnect



creates a paradox: firms report shortages of skilled workers while many educated young people struggle to secure suitable employment.

Digital capability has emerged as another defining fault line. Enterprises that adopt digital tools tend to scale faster, access broader markets, and employ more workers. At the same time, digital literacy remains uneven, particularly among workers in rural and semi-urban areas. Without focused digital skilling efforts, technological change risks reinforcing existing inequalities in employment outcomes rather than broadening opportunity.

Micro, small, and medium enterprises sit at the heart of India's employment challenge. MSMEs account for a substantial share of jobs and serve as the primary entry point for new labour market participants. However, most microenterprises remain confined to subsistence operations, employing only the owner. Constraints such as limited access to formal credit, low technology adoption, and regulatory complexity discourage expansion and hiring. Evidence from policy assessments shows that even modest improvements in access to finance or digital tools significantly increase the likelihood that these enterprises will hire additional workers. Strengthening MSMEs is, therefore, essential not only for job creation but also for improving job quality.

This is where closer collaboration

between skill institutions and enterprises becomes critical. Large firms may invest in internal training systems, but MSMEs depend on external ecosystems. Apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and industry-linked curricula can bridge the gap between education and employment. Training models that combine classroom instruction with workplace exposure deliver better employment outcomes than standalone approaches.

Bridging the gap

What is required now is a shift from fragmented interventions to a coherent workforce strategy. Skill development must be anchored in labour-market demand rather than in training targets. Stronger employer participation in curriculum design, assessment, and certification can ensure that skills acquired translate into employability. At the same time, smoother pathways between academic and vocational education are essential to reduce stigma and increase participation in skills-based learning.

Universal access to basic digital skills, combined with targeted training in technology-enabled and platform-based work, can expand employment opportunities across sectors. For women and rural youth, digital access can lower entry barriers by enabling flexible and location-independent work.

Equally critical is enabling MSMEs to absorb skilled labour. Employment growth at scale will remain constrained unless these firms are supported to move beyond subsistence operations. Easier access to formal credit, simplified compliance requirements, and incentives linked to hiring and skill upgrading can encourage small enterprises to expand their workforces. When combined with apprenticeships and on-the-job training, such measures can strengthen the link between skills, productivity, and wages.

Finally, workforce policy must balance national coherence with flexibility. Labour markets vary widely across India, and skill strategies must align with local economic structures while maintaining national standards for quality and certification. Coordination between states, industry bodies, and training institutions is essential to ensure that skill investments translate into real employment outcomes.

India's demographic window that promises growth and opportunity will narrow over time, and delays carry real economic and social costs. Population advantage alone does not guarantee prosperity. Skills are the bridge between aspiration and opportunity. Building that bridge deliberately and at scale will determine whether India converts its demographic promise into durable economic strength.

(The writer is Director, Centre of Economics, Law and Public Policy, at National Law University, Jodhpur)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Big cats and monsoon mysteries

Tiger safaris are not so much a wildlife tour; they are a quest for hope

ARUNA PARANDHAMA

Our monsoon vacation was in Nagarhole National Park. My American friends were chuffed about the prospect of spotting a tiger. When we asked our safari driver if they had had any sightings, the disclaimer came quickly. Since it was monsoon, the big cats barely made any appearances. Such disclaimers are like purchasing an exorbitantly priced product and looking at the warranty, which reads: 'Works only on certain days when Jupiter is in retrograde.'

We set off in our safari jeep. It was not long before we saw elephants. What a magnificent sight! But, we did not come here to meet Jumbo and

family, to be honest. We came here for Bagheera, for Sher Khan! Birds appeared, posed, and disappeared. The forest was quiet. No monkeys warning deer, and that meant terrible news. No luck with the tiger.

The recent tiger count in the forest, we were told, was 149. But that day, all 149 tigers seemed to be on staycation in the deepest hideouts of the forest. We came as near as we could see a tiger when we saw a heap of tiger droppings. Our driver jammed on the brakes and studied it carefully. He had the expression of a philosopher deep in thought. With the face of the nation's veteran detective ACP Pradyumna of *CID* fame, he said, "It is fresh. The tiger either turned left or right."

We thought, "Oh, thank you, ACP Pradyumna; that is a rational conclusion. It makes perfect sense. The tiger could have slipped into the thickets from the right or from the left. Not from under the land or by taking to the skies."

Our driver shushed us this time to say, "Shhhh...I heard a growl." I wondered, did he though? Or was that a gimmick to pass off as a customer service innovation? What if the tiger safaris in India are the longest-running scam? How come that out of 149 tigers, not even one came to strike us a pose? We did not see stripes that day; we got a consolation prize—tiger droppings. My American friends promised to keep coming back to India until they spot a tiger in one of the safaris.

Tiger safaris are not so much a wildlife tour; they are a quest for hope. One of the hopes is that someday, when the tiger wishes to, the curtains of the forest will magically part for us eager tourists, and he will come strike a pose (albeit for a few seconds) and flit back into the dense foliage. This time, we came so close, yet so far. Perhaps the proverb is true: in the jungle, we may never spot a tiger, but the tiger most certainly has spotted you.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The government should prioritise women's safety

The horrific news of a 25-year-old woman being gang-raped by two men in a moving vehicle and then thrown out at a deserted place brings back the painful memory of the Nirbhaya case 13 years ago ('Faridabad woman gang-raped in a van, 2 held,' Jan 1). This is not an isolated incident, and such rape cases are happening frequently, making a mockery of women's safety in India despite many catchy slogans about women.

Mockery of exam system

Apropos 'KSEAB mandates web-streaming II PU practical exams to curb malpractice' (Jan 1), the enhancement of marks for practical exams from 10 to 30 has increased the scope for malpractice despite departmental surveillance. This is because, in most cases, awarding of marks becomes subjective, as awarding lower marks may be perceived as retributive on the part of lecturers.

It is a mockery to set a mere 21 as the pass mark, which entitles a student to enter professional streams. It is still unclear whether a student needs to score just 30 to pass with theory and practical marks combined or if separate minimum marks are required.
TV Pandarinath Naidu, Kudige

Loopholes in law

Apropos 'Clarify on drug factory

ops, city top cop tells Maha agency' (Dec 31), it highlights a critical failure in our system: legal loopholes are being exploited to bypass essential safety regulations, putting lives at risk. The law needs to prioritise public safety above all else.
V U Shivani Sirisha, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: letters@deccanherald.co.in (only letters emailed—not handwritten—will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

Our job is to form a triple-engine government (in Maharashtra) and work for the people... We don't get involved in controversies. The Prime Minister has encouraged us to serve the people, and we work by putting the country first, the party second, and ourselves last...



Piyush Goyal, Union Minister

Don't mistake dramatics for a conscience.

Louise Penny

TO BE PRECISE

Lokpal scraps Rs 5 Crore BMW car plan



IN PERSPECTIVE

State discretion trumps due process

Replacing MGNREGA without adequate consultation involving the workers is an arbitrary exercise of power

MAANSI VERMA

While responding to the debate on the Sabka Bima, Sabki Raksha Bill, which amends three insurance laws and, among other things, permits 100% FDI in Indian insurance companies, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed Members of Lok Sabha that these draft amendments were shared with all the states and Union Territories in November 2024 for their comments. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha a year later and passed the same day.

When MPs questioned the rush, the minister responded by saying that not only were the states consulted, but the Department of Financial Services also consulted other stakeholders, such as insurers, industry bodies, regulators, and the public, through their website. Therefore, she argued, it was not a rushed legislation. The government agreed to refer two bills introduced in Lok Sabha in the last week of the winter session—the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan Bill and the Securities Market Code Bill—to a Joint Parliament Committee and the Standing Committee on Finance, respectively.

However, for the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, which repeals and replaces MGNREGA, neither the states nor the public were consulted, nor was the Bill referred to a Committee of Parliament. The government offered no justification for carrying out extensive consultations on some bills but wrongly withholding them on another bill.

This is largely because neither the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy, 2014, which generally governs consultations before bills are introduced in Parliament, nor the reference of introduced bills to Committees of Parliament is mandatory. Both these processes enable the exercise of discretion by the government. However, when discretion is exercised without justification, it becomes an arbitrary exercise of State power.

In this case, it can be argued that when state governments could be consulted on the amendment of insurance laws a year in advance, why not on the changes made to MGNREGA, considering the ramifications on state finances? MGNREGA workers also have a higher claim to being involved in the making of laws that affect their rights than the insurance companies. But it's the latter that the

government favoured in its exercise of discretion.

This is a violation of Article 14, which mandates the State not to deny equality before law to any person. Extending this non-discrimination principle to law-making processes, it can be argued that the arbitrary exclusion of any stakeholder likely to be affected by a proposed law and policy from the making of that law and policy is violative of Article 14.

Furthermore, any unjustified exercise of discretion by the government which extinguishes avenues for citizens to express their opinion, feedback, agreement, as well as dissent with any proposed government law and policy will fall foul of the mandate under Article 19(1)(a).

Undermining life and livelihoods

The Supreme Court has held that 'life' under Article 21 is not mere animal existence, but consists of elements that enable life with dignity. To be able to exercise one's agency by participating in democratic processes, including law-making processes, is an important aspect of a dignified life.

Besides, livelihood has been identified as a protected right under Article 21 by the Supreme Court, which cannot be taken away by the State without due process. Applying this to the repealing of MGNREGA, which alters the fundamental nature of employment under the Act (from a right to a State charity), the due process should, at least, include the workers' participation in the making of the new law.

In 2006, the South African Constitutional Court invalidated a series of laws in the *Doctors for Life* case for failing to involve the public in the making of the laws. The Constitution of South Africa explicitly mandates the National Assembly to facilitate public involvement in the law-making processes, but it doesn't lay down the means to do that. In this specific case, while consultations were held, the Court found those to be insufficient to meet the constitutional requirement.

Though the Indian Constitution doesn't explicitly acknowledge a right to meaningful public participation in law-making, it is a necessary manifestation of our constitutional democracy and can be derived from Articles 14, 19, and 21. It must translate into law-making processes which are transparent and inclusive, provide reasonable time and opportunities to all stakeholders to inform laws and policies, and involve unbiased application of mind to the feedback received. None of this happened before MGNREGA was replaced, and for that reason, it can be argued that the new Act fails the test of constitutionality.

(The writer is a lawyer and founder of Maadhyam, a civic engagement initiative)

Media’s slow shift on disability coverage gains momentum

L SUBRAMANI

For many persons with disabilities (PwD) and those working in the sector, 2026 is likely to mark an inflection point in media coverage, both in India and abroad.

Narratives about disability are steadily pivoting towards the social model – one that focuses on removing barriers rather than viewing disability as an illness. This shift is being driven by growing attention on the role of technology.

For decades, media coverage followed the medical model, portraying disability as an illness to be cured. Media focus largely remained on human interest stories of overcoming adversity.

A gradual transition to the social model is under way, influenced by widespread technology access, particularly smartphones. In the “Comprehensive Modular Survey: Telecom, 2025” from India’s Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, access has risen from near zero before 2010 to around 97% among

15-22-year-olds, including disabled youth.

Affordable Android devices with TalkBack (screen reader) software and iPhones with ‘VoiceOver’ have enabled independent access to banking through UPI apps, online shopping, entertainment on OTT platforms with captions, and daily communication for many persons with disabilities.

GSMA studies show about 62% of surveyed disabled users now rely on smartphones for these activities. Separate 2019 surveys indicate almost 39% of persons with severe disabilities use assistive technology, with smartphones as their primary tool.

News about this transformation, once reported mainly by NGOs and academia, is now entering mainstream media, though still in a limited way.

Assistive technology now lets disabled individuals share experiences on platforms such as X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Reddit, increasingly influencing coverage as traditional media picks up viral stories.

The government’s approach now uses

AI-powered technology to deliver schemes to PwDs in education, health care, and livelihoods. Recent media coverage has begun to reflect this shift.

Many Disabled People’s Organisations believe mainstream media still relies on inspiration tropes, focusing on personal stories of “overcoming” disability. Journalists may struggle to grasp how issues such as accessibility affect persons with disabilities, partly due to limited information. DPOs and NGOs themselves also find it difficult to highlight these issues. The new year could mark a shift, with more channels now available to engage directly with the media.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, and the Sugamya Bharat campaign have given new dimensions to how the media understands disability issues. With organisations increasingly reaching out to media outlets via workshops, sensitisation sessions, and campaigns, the priorities and focus of newsrooms are also transitioning.

Media coverage is gradually shifting to-

wards inaccessible infrastructure, barriers in education and healthcare, and inclusion as a right.

In 2026, media is expected to increase its focus on employment rights, quotas, AI-powered productivity, workplace accommodation, remote work, and anti-discrimination. The 2026 Census, expanding disability data to all 21 recognised conditions under the RPwD Act, will prompt wider coverage of undercounted conditions such as ADHD and Long Covid, raising calls for better data and policy.

Healthcare access and climate vulnerability are set to gain greater prominence in 2026 debates.

In the United States, enforcement of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, updated in 2024, will require hospitals to meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards for digital platforms and ensure effective communication through interpreters and assistive aids by May 2026. In India, similar obligations exist under the RPWD Act, mandating barrier-free health care, accessible ICT, and free services for low-income per-

sons with disabilities, alongside national digital accessibility standards. Meanwhile, UN and International Labour Organisation forums increasingly highlight the disproportionate impact of climate change on persons with disability, strengthening calls for inclusive disaster planning and social protection.

AI advances have expanded opportunities for disabled persons. Blind users now generate visual content with text-to-image tools, while apps such as Be My AI and Seeing AI describe photos and environments. The use of smart glasses has also increased and may receive wider media coverage.

AI-driven captioning and speech recognition are also improving access for deaf and non-speaking users, including autistic people. As these tools become routine, media coverage is likely to treat them as part of everyday life and work. The extent of this shift will depend on sustained engagement between disabled persons, their organisations, and the media.

AI tools are improving workplace accessibility, while digital platforms are opening

new employment and business opportunities. Media coverage in 2026 is likely to focus more on disability-led innovation and the role of accessible technology in reshaping employment.

What can people and organisations do? In 2026, Disabled People’s Organisations and NGOs will need to engage more proactively with journalists, using social media and other channels to frame disability issues in terms of their wider social relevance. Resources such as UNESCO’s manual on Disability Equality in the Media and the NCPEDP–Jindal Guide to Reporting on Disability can support more consistent and informed coverage.

For journalists covering disability

In 2026, journalists are likely to frame disability coverage around expanded census data, AI-driven productivity, job reservation debates, healthcare mandates, and climate vulnerability. Disabled people are increasingly treated as experts and primary sources, rather than depicted only through inspirational stories.

In 2026, there will be journeys to the moon and Mars, new visions of the cosmos and a solar eclipse that might be worth traveling for

KATRINA MILLER AND MICHAEL ROSTON

Nothing about space is that you have to be patient. The universe does not bend to earthly time scales, and events are governed by the unalterable realities of physics and engineering. They will happen when they are good and ready.

Sometimes we have to wait much longer than expected for events in our solar system, and beyond. Especially in spaceflight, you might hear about events, learn they are postponed and then eventually hear about them again. In 2026, there is some hope that your patience will be rewarded.

The Artemis II Mission

NASA is sending astronauts back toward the moon. No, for real this time.

It has been more than 50 years since humans exited low-Earth orbit and travelled around the moon. In the time since, space agencies have built space shuttles and space stations, but their crews have remained within our planet’s close embrace.

Early in 2026, astronauts from NASA and the Canadian Space Agency will again travel around the moon and back. The crew of four is made up of Victor Glover, Jeremy Hansen, Reid Wiseman and Christina Koch. Glover will be the first Black person to go to the moon, and Koch the first woman. Hansen will be the first Canadian, and the first non-American, to ever do that.

The 10-day journey will not greatly differ from that of Apollo 8, the first time NASA astronauts looped around the moon, in December 1968. But if the mission gets off the ground at Kennedy Space Centre in Florida and splashes down in the Pacific Ocean, it will prove that the Orion capsule, a key vehicle in NASA’s lunar infrastructure, is a safe ride for astronauts. It could happen as soon as February.

Landing NASA astronauts on the moon is another story entirely.

A new moon race

China has set a goal of landing astronauts on the moon before 2030. In August, it conducted the first test on Earth of Lanyue, its lunar lander for astronauts. It intends to use that vehicle for an Apollo-like mission.

NASA, by contrast, has planned a more complex mission, Artemis III. It relies on Starship, a giant next-generation spacecraft built by SpaceX, to land two astronauts near the moon’s south pole. The agency said late in 2024 that it would achieve this feat by mid-2027.

But SpaceX, Elon Musk’s company, struggled in its Starship test campaign this past year, and doubts grew about that timeline. In November, NASA sought alternative proposals for Artemis III, and President Donald Trump signed an executive order in December that set a lunar landing in 2028 as the goal.

That date is ambitious, and two events in 2026 could set the stage for whether China gets astronauts to the moon before Americans return.

First, SpaceX plans to test the latest version of its Starship vehicle. If early flights succeed and it is able to relaunch a vehicle that fully orbits the Earth, the company’s plans may be back on track, even if it cannot achieve a 2028 landing.

The second event involves Blue Origin,



NASA astronauts inspect the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope’s Wide Field Instrument upon delivery to NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Centre in Greenbelt, Maryland. FILE PHOTO/NYT

Your wait for these space events is about to pay off

the spaceflight company owned by Jeff Bezos, the Amazon founder. The company is planning a robotic lunar landing with a version of its Blue Moon vehicle in 2026. If that mission is successful, NASA could confidently consider Blue Origin’s alternative lander proposal, which is simpler and could potentially be ready sooner than Starship.

Summer eclipse

On August 12, the moon will slide between Earth and the sun, causing a total solar eclipse.

The moon will temporarily block the sun, casting a shadow along a path on Earth’s surface. The eclipse will begin in northern Russia and travel over the Arctic Ocean, south through Greenland and Iceland, and across the Atlantic Ocean. It will pass over the northern part of Spain and end in the Mediterranean Sea. Tourists from around the world are expected to flock to Iceland and Spain to view the spectacle.

Those who live in or travel to the path of the eclipse will be able to see the sun’s corona, or outer atmosphere, for up to 2 minutes 18 seconds, a phenomenon known as totality. People in regions that neighbour the direct path will see a partial solar eclipse, during which only part of the sun will be obscured by the moon.

Rubin’s survey of the stars

The Vera C. Rubin Observatory, which houses a telescope on a mountain in Chile, observed its first light in 2025 and shared breathtaking images of the universe with

the world in June. The observatory is set to begin its official survey of space and time in early 2026.

For the next 10 years, Rubin will capture about 1,000 images of the southern sky almost every night in one of the darkest places on Earth, using the largest digital camera ever constructed. The wealth of data will elucidate how objects in the universe, like black holes and asteroids, evolve over time. It will also help astronomers better understand the nature of dark energy, a mysterious force pushing the cosmos to expand ever faster, and dark matter, the invisible substance that shapes our cosmos.

Already, Rubin has discovered more than 2,000 asteroids and spotted Comet 3I/ATLAS, an interstellar visitor from beyond our solar system that has generated a lot of buzz online.

Infrared eyes in space

NASA is preparing to launch the Roman Space Telescope, named after Nancy Grace Roman, the agency’s first chief astronomer, no later than May 2027. But it plans to move the telescope to Kennedy Space Centre in Florida in the summer for lift-off as early as the fall.

Astronomers will use the Roman telescope’s infrared vision to map billions of galaxies, data that will help them learn more about dark energy. Construction of the telescope was completed just months after astronomers uncovered evidence that dark energy is more complex than previously understood.

The telescope will also help researchers

hunt for exoplanets and study the swirling disks of cosmic matter in which they form, expanding our catalogue of other worlds in the Milky Way. Some of these planets may be orbiting within a star’s habitable zone or may have gone entirely rogue, existing in the galaxy unattached to any host star.

Landing on a Martian moon

The United States and China both plan to send robotic spacecraft to collect pieces of Mars for study on Earth. But Japan might beat them at that game. Sort of.

Mars has two small moons, Phobos and Deimos, which have long fascinated scientists. Theories about their origins vary. One holds that they are pieces of the red planet ejected into space by a collision that occurred early in the solar system’s history. Alternatively, they might be asteroids captured by Martian gravity.

Studying those moons up close, and bringing samples of them to Earth, could help sort out that mystery. Japan’s mission, called Martian Moons Exploration, or MMX, intends to do that, reaching Mars to study the two moons, then attempting a brief landing on the larger one, Phobos, to collect samples.

Japan has completed similar missions twice with Hayabusa and Hayabusa2, with the second mission bringing material from the asteroid Ryugu to Earth in 2020. It might try to launch MMX at the end of 2026, although a recent failed flight of H3, a Japanese rocket, could affect the launch schedule.

The New York Times

Time to rethink CRR-SLR shackles

VASANT G HEGDE AND LALAN MISHRA

India is serious about unlocking its full economic potential, becoming a developed nation, and realising the goals of Viksit Bharat and Atmanirbhar Bharat, it must confront a question: are yesterday’s regulations holding back today’s growth? Are certain archaic regulatory provisions constraining liquidity, restricting credit flow, hindering economic growth, and undermining the global competitiveness of India’s banking system?

For decades, the fractional reserve system—anchored in the cash reserve ratio (CRR) and statutory liquidity ratio (SLR)—has been the backbone of Indian banking. These norms helped the system avoid major collapses, including during the global financial crisis in 2008, when Indian banks remained largely unscathed. By ensuring that banks parked a portion of their deposits with the Reserve Bank of India and invested heavily in government securities, CRR and SLR created a strong safety net.

This arrangement, however, belonged to an era of physical ledgers, limited supervision, and slower decision-making. Digital India 2025 bears little resemblance to India in the 1980s.

Today’s banking system is faster, more connected, and deeply digital. Banks are more mature, better governed, and well capitalised. Regulatory supervision has also evolved, with the RBI now using modern, real-time digital tools to monitor institutions. In short, the system is stronger than ever. This raises an important question: are reserve ratios such as CRR and SLR—vestiges of the colonial era—still relevant?

Historically, the RBI relied heavily on CRR and SLR to regulate money supply in the economy. This reliance peaked during the 1980s, when CRR ranged between 7% and 9%, while SLR touched nearly 38%. The objective was to ensure government borrowing requirements were met (via SLR) and money supply was kept in check (via CRR). Over time, these ratios have been steadily reduced. CRR fell to around 4.5% in the 2000s and stands at about 3% today, even as banks earn no interest on CRR balances parked with the RBI. SLR has also declined and stabilised at roughly 18%, reflecting a shift towards a more market-driven economy.

The RBI today relies more on short-term rates such as the repo rate and the marginal standing facility (MSF) for day-to-day liquidity management.

Yet the current framework continues to impose costs. Reserve requirements reduce banks’ lending capacity and put pressure on their profit margins. The banking industry’s credit deposit (CD) ratio is now nudging 80%. With deposit growth lagging credit demand, banks have been compelled to issue certificates of deposit—amounting to nearly Rs 5 lakh crore—to fund lending.

Globally, most developed economies do not have such high fixed reserve requirements. China maintains a reserve requirement of 7.5%. In contrast, banks in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Sweden and the United States operated without mandatory reserve requirements. In these economies, central banks regulate money supply in the economy through interest rates and market operations. Critics argue that zero-reserve systems heighten liquidity risk and increase the possibility of a run on the banks. Proponents counter that strong deposit insurance mitigates these risks.

India’s banking system has strengthened significantly in recent years. Banks are comfortably capitalised, well above Basel norms, and most have exited the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework. Digital supervision and reporting have reduced the scope for misreporting. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code reforms have improved credit behaviour and recovery mechanisms. Small depositors are protected by insurance cover up to Rs 5 lakh per depositor per bank. A deep and liquid government securities market aids liquidity management, while a 100% liquidity coverage ratio ensures resilience against run-offs on banks.

Together, these developments show that banking system safety no longer depends solely on fixed reserve rules.

While the CRR could remain at its current level of 3%, reducing the SLR from 18% to 10% would free up nearly Rs 20 lakh crore, which could be used for lending. This would ease pressure on banks, improve profitability, and help lower interest rates. To prevent market disruption, the reduction can be phased over several quarters.

Aligning India’s reserve framework with global practices would enhance flexibility and efficiency. In time, the SLR itself could be phased out altogether, allowing India’s financial system to fully align with global best practices.

(The writers are ex-bankers and currently train bankers at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Bengaluru)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: JANUARY 1976

INC session ends with commitment call to partymen

Komagata Maru Nagar, January 1
The 75th plenary session of the Indian National Congress concluded here today after a fervent appeal by the Prime Minister and the Congress President to partymen to work as a bridge between the people and the Government and mobilise popular support for implementation of party policies. The session, which marks 90 years of the party’s evolution, set its seal of approval on the party’s policies on political, economic and international affairs. They will serve as guidelines till the next plenary.

25 YEARS AGO: JANUARY 2001

TCH colleges allowed to charge hefty fee

Bangalore, Jan 1
In a recent order, the State Government has allowed aided teachers’ training colleges a hefty development fee in addition to the tuition fee, almost doubling the total fees payable by a student per year. This has stirred up a hornet’s nest as unaided private colleges have not been allowed the same benefit. The 60-odd aided TCH colleges in the State can now collect a development fee of Rs 3,000 each from management category students and Rs 1000 each from government quota students.

The *Bhagavad Gita*, in its seventh chapter speaks about the life force that enlivens all living beings, without whose presence, they would be lifeless shells. The *Gita* further says that it is this life force or the divine force that is responsible for the creation, sustenance and final dissolution of all beings.

In support of this statement, the *Gita* proceeds to explain with examples many of the ubiquitous phenomena that we take for granted. ‘What is it that gives liquid nature to water? What is it that gives effulgence to the moon and the sun? What is that ‘OM’, the eternal, auspicious proclamation that all the Vedas extol? What is it that

is the primordial sound in space (what modern science now terms as the background humming – the remnants of the big bang from which this universe came into existence)? What exactly is the nature of the valour of those valorous beings (who or what imparts this valour to them)? Who imparts fragrance to plants and flowers on this earth? How does fire get its quality of light or effulgence? What imparts life to all living things? Who grants the quality of asceticism and renunciation to those holy ascetics?

The answer, says the *Gita*, is



the supreme divinity or ‘Self’ which pervades all creation, which is omnipresent.

To further drive home this truth, the *Gita* now says, in the first person, in the voice of Lord Krishna that “it is I who am the primordial seed of all living beings. I manifest myself as the intelligence or mental acuity in those brilliantly endowed ones. (This is the reason why in India extraordinarily brilliant or gifted persons are viewed as divinely blessed beings with appellations like Saraswati *Putra*, *Purusha* Saraswati etc.) I am the valour in those valorous ones. (Here the word

Tejas is used in the sense of valour or bravery as against the general usage of brightness of facial appearance that comes with deep erudition, austerities etc). I am the strength in those powerful people who are free from greed (*Kama*- desire for what one does not have) and attachment (*Raga*- the attachment to what one already possesses) and whose desire is not in violation of *Dharma* - righteousness.

It is this invisible string of *Dharma* that binds all creation together, like the string that binds all the disparate beads together into one attractive ornament. ‘Strive to realise this’ is the message.

Gold missing from more artefacts in Sabarimala, says SIT report

Probe team points to seven metal parts above door frames of temple

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

The special investigation team (SIT) probing the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple gold heist has found that more of the precious metal was looted by the accused from the temple.

In a report submitted to a court in Kollam seeking the custody of the accused, the SIT stated that gold from more parts of the temple had been stolen.

Apart from the two Dwara-palaka sculptures and door frames, seven metal parts above the door frames were also found to have been handed over to Unnikrishnan Potti

CM: Clarify on accused meeting Sonia

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday denied the Congress' allegation that his office was interfering in the probe into the Sabarimala gold heist. Instead, he asked the Congress to explain how the accused managed to meet AICC leader Sonia Gandhi.

for gold-plating.

Hence, the gold from those parts with carvings of gods was also suspected to have been stolen by the accused, said the SIT in the report while seeking custody of the key accused — Potti, Chennai-based Smart Creations' Chief Executive Officer Pankaj Bhandari, and Govardhan, who runs Roddam Jewels in Karnataka's Ballari.

The SIT also maintained that the exact quantum of the

gold looted could be determined only after the ongoing scientific examination of the metal plates was over.

The sanctum sanctorum of the temple and associated structures were gold-plated in 1998-99 with the sponsorship of industrialist Vijay Mallya.

Meanwhile, the political row over the heist continued, with Congress MP Adoor Prakash accusing the chief minister's political secretary P Sasi of fabricating reports that the SIT could interrogate the lawmaker.

Prakash and another Congress MP, Anto Antony, were seen in pictures of Potti and Govardhan with AICC leader Sonia Gandhi. CPM leaders alleged that the MPs arranged the meeting.

The Congress has alleged that the SIT's reported moves against Congress MPs were a political ploy as two CPM leaders have already been held by the SIT, while former Devaswom minister and CPM leader Kadakampally Surendran has been quizzed.

Andhra man kills his three children, dies by suicide

HYDERABAD, DHNS: A 35-year-old man killed his three children and died by suicide in Andhra Pradesh's Nandyal district.

The police identified the man as Vemulapati Surendra. He allegedly gave Kavyasri (7), Jnaneshwari (4), and Suryagagan (2) a drink laced with poison. His wife had died by suicide in August last year.

The police said Surendra made several calls to friends to wish them a Happy New Year on Wednesday night, and his last call was around 1 am on Thursday.

On Thursday morning, Surendra's mother, Krishnaveni, came to visit them. When there was no response,

she looked through a window and found all four lying on the ground. She alerted the police, who arrived at the scene and initiated a probe.

"Surendra mixed poison in drinks for his daughters and milk for his son. After their deaths, he ended his own life," said Uyyalavada SI K Ramireddy.

The police suspect Surendra, depressed since his wife's death and struggling financially, took the extreme step under mental distress.

(If you are in distress or having suicidal tendencies, please reach out to these 24/7 helplines: KIRAN 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayawani at 104 for help)

BJP leader attacks SRK as KKR buys B'deshi cricketer

**SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS**

Senior BJP leader Sangeet Som has branded Shah Rukh Khan a "traitor", claiming that he has "no right to live in the country" for acquiring a Bangladeshi cricketer in the auction for his IPL team.

The controversial BJP leader from Western Uttar Pradesh, Som, warned that the Bangladeshi cricketer Mustafizur Rehman, who was bought by Shah Rukh's IPL team, would not be allowed to step out of the airport.

"Our sisters are being raped in Bangladesh... Hindus are



Sangeet Som

being killed there, but Shah Rukh Khan still went ahead and bought Rehman for his IPL team," the former MLA said while addressing a gathering in Meerut on Wednesday.

"Traitors like Shah Rukh Khan should understand that he is a star only because of the people of the country," he said. "These things (buying Bangladeshi players) will not be allowed in the country," he added.

Som said that Khan should leave the country as "he had no right to live here".

"There is no dearth of traitors in the country... they must be acted against else they will continue to defame and humiliate the nation," the BJP leader said.

He said that some people had been "encouraging anti-national" activities through films and cricket. "Such people must be identified, and they must be kept under watch," he added.

Kolkata Knight Riders, the IPL franchise in which Khan owns the majority share, has acquired Rehman for Rs 9.5 crore in the IPL auction.

Som has a history of triggering controversies with his remarks.

Amid adulteration controversy, Tirumala Laddu registers record sales in 2025

**S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS**

The sale of the Tirumala 'Sri-vari Laddu' prasadam reached a record high in 2025, marking the highest sales in a decade.

Compared to 2024, laddu sales rose by 10%. While 12.15 crore laddus were sold to devotees in 2024, the number climbed to 13.52 crore in 2025.

The milestone comes amid

a controversy surrounding the quality of cow ghee used in preparing the revered Tirumala Laddu Prasadam. The Supreme Court recently ordered a probe into allegations of adulteration in the ghee supplied for laddu preparation.

The Srivari Laddu is not just a sweet and it is considered a divine blessing from Lord Venkateswara and a symbol of faith for the more than 2.5 crore pil-

grims who visit the Tirumala hill shrine every year.

The Tirupati Laddu received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2009. Its preparation follows a traditional formula called Dittam, which specifies the ingredients and their proportions.

The offering of laddus to Lord Venkateswara dates back to 1715. Today, around 700 cooks known as Potu Kar-

mikulu work in the Laddu Potu, the temple kitchen, to prepare the prasadam.

The Laddu Potu kitchen can produce up to 8 lakh laddus a day and features three conveyor belts that transport both raw ingredients and finished laddus.

In a record single-day sale, devotees purchased 5.13 lakh laddus on December 27, 2025, the highest in over a decade.

On regular days, the Tirum-

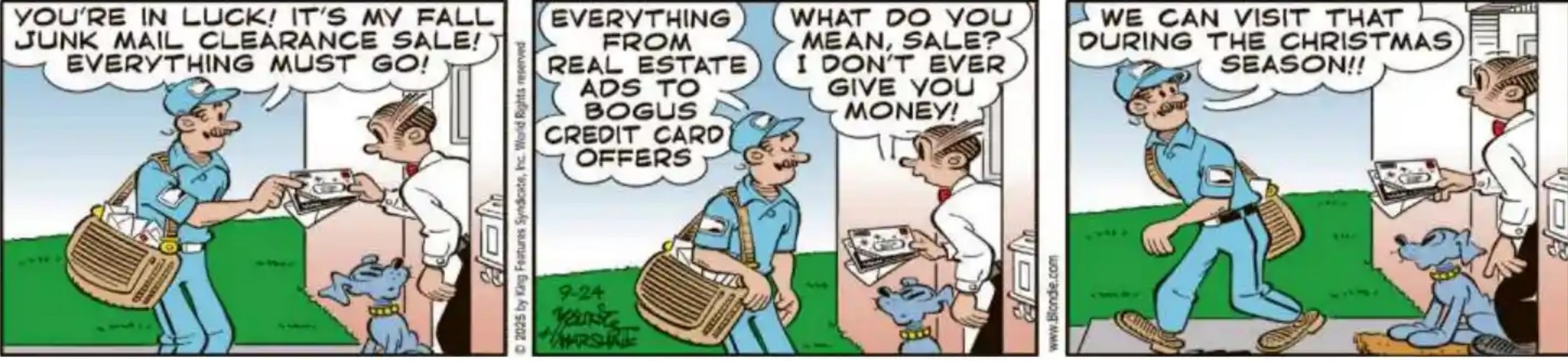
ala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) prepares around four lakh laddus, scaling up production to between eight and ten lakh, including buffer stock, on special occasions.

Around 700 Sri Vaishnava Brahmins work in two shifts round the clock, maintaining strict adherence to religious customs and traditional methods in preparing the prasadam at the Srivari Potu.

MISCELLANY

COMICS

Blondie



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



JUMBLE

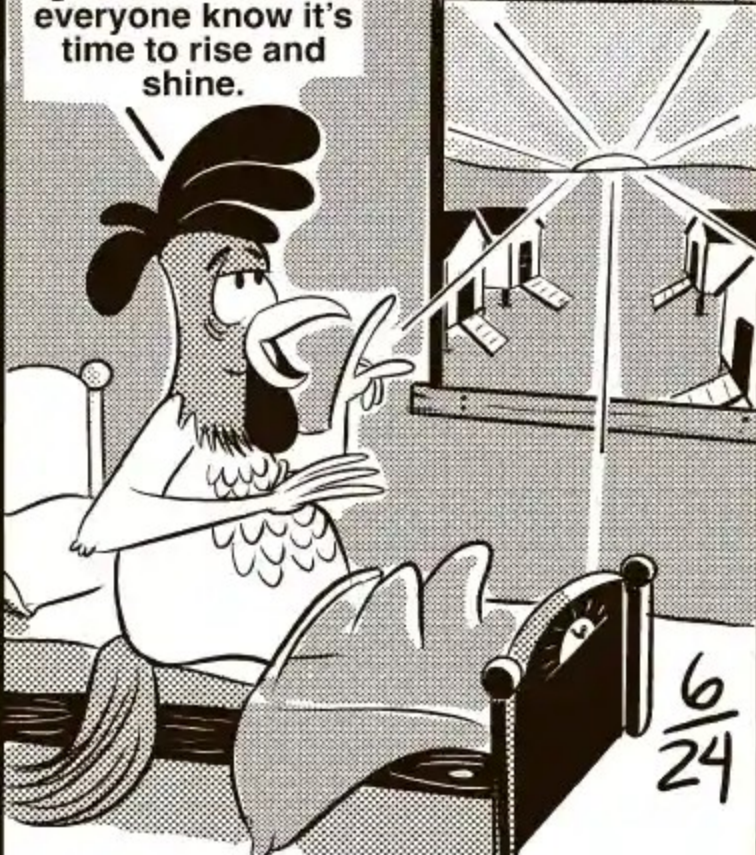
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CNARH
NDUMO
TIWNIH
DEHLUD

Yesterday's Jumbles: SILKY LILAC BROKER GROUCH
Answer: Their firewood business was doing so well that they had a — BACKLOG

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



Luckily, my body clock woke me up. I guess I need to let everyone know it's time to rise and shine.

THE ROOSTER WONDERED WHY HE WOKE UP SO EARLY, BUT THEN IT —

HITORI-3247

6	4	3	8	6	4	7	3
3	5	8	5	7	6	1	5
3	1	6	5	4	2	8	7
2	5	5	4	4	3	5	8
4	3	5	1	5	7	6	5
4	7	4	6	4	8	2	1
7	8	3	5	2	7	4	6
5	6	5	7	3	4	5	5

SOLUTION TO 3246

3	8	2	4	7
3	5	8	2	4
6	7	3	2	4
4	1	6	8	7
2	4	6	1	3
4	2	5	7	6
1	5	3	7	2
5	6	4	8	1

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3247

11	16	4	23	19	16	31
14	11	6	22	19	6	10
10	10	11	4	6	3	10
13	23	9	8	11	4	3
9	17	22	6	14	8	17
20	17	17	7	6	17	22
14	17	4	8	12	4	9
30	6	4	8	12	4	9
14	17	4	8	12	4	9
30	6	4	8	12	4	9

SOLUTION TO 3246

5	9	3	1	2	4
1	2	4	8	1	6
4	1	3	7	4	5
2	6	2	6	9	1
6	1	7	8	2	9
9	5	7	9	8	1
7	9	3	5	1	2
6	4	8	5	1	3
7	9	1	2	6	7
2	7	1	5	9	8
6	9	1	5	9	8

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X- 3784

7	3						
	8						9
1							
			3				
9				5		6	
		1			6		2
2							4
	6			5	3		7

SOLUTION TO 3783

5	8	1	7	3	4	9	2
4	7	9	2	5	6	3	1
6	3	2	9	8	1	7	5
7	1	5	3	6	2	8	4
9	2	3	8	4	7	1	6
8	6	4	5	1	9	2	3
2	4	8	1	9	5	6	7
1	9	6	4	7	3	5	8
3	5	7	6	2	8	4	9

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12323

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10							
13							
17							
20							
24							
27							
30							

- ACROSS**
- Brittle (5)
 - Snapshot (5)
 - Take prisoner (7)
 - Wall painting (5)
 - Command (5)
 - Addict (5)
 - Many (7)
 - Eggs (3)
 - Second-hand (4)
 - Proverbs (6)
 - Cease-fire (5)
 - Convince (6)
 - Fairy (4)
 - Fish eggs (3)
 - Less refined (7)
 - Stream (5)
 - Sofa (5)
 - Fulcrum (5)
 - Answers (7)
 - Fossil resin (5)
 - Insurgent (5)
- DOWN**
- Excites (6)
 - Frightened (6)
 - Friend (3)
 - Delay (5)
 - Cater (7)
 - In this place (4)
 - Many (7)
 - Sword (5)
 - Sweet substance (5)
 - Poetry (5)
 - Leers (5)
 - Moving (5)
 - Performer (5)
 - Coach (7)
 - Element (6)
 - Extol (6)
 - Take away (6)
 - Stringed instrument (5)
 - Unusual (4)
 - For every (3)

CRYPTIC

- ACROSS**
- Stayed over in south Devon, initially (5)
 - Swallow with a soft cry of pain (5)
 - Meat it can be a sin to cook in the oven? (7)
 - Fresh part of the course? (5)
 - A numbered account? (5)
 - Try an out-of-the-way blend of tea (5)
 - It's said in scorn of a large port (3,4)
 - In the rain, we finish last (3)
 - Solo composition, Norwegian (4)
 - The folks fly out to a friend in France (6)
 - Area that's not pretty flat? (5)
 - Girl I leave, formally (6)
 - Weaken in the face of a defeat (4)
 - Does it taste like corn? (3)
 - Crazy bunch? (7)
 - Taint by dropping softly in the dirt (5)
 - It's hard being a former party leader (5)
 - One initially dropped? (5)
 - The game everybody may be bent on (7)
 - In a recent survey, there were hundreds (5)
 - Money, you'll find, you need to work for (5)
- DOWN**
- After Jack, Sid turns up in Dr Who's vehicle (6)
 - Exaggerate on account of the party (6)
 - Study up with Ned (3)
 - In name, at least, it's essential (5)
 - To be one's deliverer is no job for a boy! (7)
 - No longer a concert piece (4)
 - Mount a camel outright! (6)
 - Having four legs, can it possibly bleat? (5)
 - Limb heard to bend (5)
 - What every single American has in his eye? (5)
 - Win about half a game as a rugby team! (5)
 - The kinds that can remove tar from a spoilt tapestry? (5)
 - Last word in sporting events? (5)
 - Skin trouble a politician gets in plenty (7)
 - Shake or disturb some tartlets (6)
 - It's easy for one to get left in front (6)
 - You may have craned to watch one perform (6)
 - Simple soul shattered by a bit of bombing (5)
 - Posted in tens? (4)
 - That's it, folks! (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12322

CRYPTIC

ACROSS: 4, Become 7, Us-eful-ly 8, Ru-ff-le 10, Chemo 13, B-one 14, Halo 15, RA-nd 16, Err 17, Roof 19, Ears 21, Main force 23, Tall 24, Last 26, No-T 27, Cher 29, Oral 32, Dais 33, Brun-O 34, Squint 35, Chap-lain 36, Health.

DOWN: 1, Hunch 2, Level (rev) 3, Ludo 4, B-y-ron 5, Cafe 6, Molars 9, Unders 11, Ham 12, Mora-1 13, Baffles 15, Ron 16, Eare 18, Oil-can 20, Actor 21, Mat 22, Oar 23, To-r-que 25, Can(can) 28, Hitch 30, Rural 31, Lorna 32, D-ill 33, BA-PS.

EASY

ACROSS: 4, Arrest 7, Eurasian 8, Deadly 10, Swats 13, Send 14, Tiny 15, Dust 16, Cow 17, Pail 19, Atom 21, Reception 23, Risk 24, Help 26, Rep 27, Ague 29, Iris 32, Scar 33, Scale 34, Sticks 35, Parlane 36, Blinds.

DOWN: 1, Feast 2, Urban 3, Asks 4, Andes 5, Read 6, Seldom 9, Entail 11, Wig 12, Types 13, Sulphur 15, Die 16, Con 18, Ack-ack 20, Topic 21, Rip 22, Tee 23, Rental 25, Oil 28, Gasp 30, Rainy 31, Sewer 32, Scan 33, Sale.

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T I R I C S N A U I I
D I S A A L R I
U W T L B O O
S A I E V T A

PAR SCORE 175-185
by JUDD

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION	
P A W I N G	RACK 1 = 12
S I L U M B E R	RACK 2 = 86
O U T I L I N E	RACK 3 = 57
T E M P E S T	RACK 4 = 72
R O M A N C E	RACK 5 = 67
PAR SCORE 200-210	JUDD'S TOTAL 294

US military says
at least 8 dead in
strikes on alleged
drug boats

WASHINGTON, AFP: The US military said Wednesday that eight people were killed in multiple new strikes on alleged drug boats, bringing the death toll in Washington's campaign against what it says are narcotics traffickers to at least 115.

US Southern Command, which is responsible for American forces operating in Central and South America, announced two sets of strikes, which were carried out on Tuesday and Wednesday.

On Tuesday, "three narco-trafficking vessels traveling as a convoy" were targeted in "international waters," it said in a statement on X.

"Three narco-terrorists aboard the first vessel were killed in the first engagement. The remaining narco-terrorists abandoned the other two vessels, jumping overboard and distancing themselves before follow-on engagements sank their respective vessels," it said.

Accompanying the statement, posted on X, was a video showing the vessels traveling together at sea and then hit by a series of explosions.

The exact location of the strikes was not immediately made clear. Previous strikes have taken place in the Caribbean or the eastern Pacific.

Trump pulls
National Guard
troops out of
major cities

WASHINGTON, AP: President Donald Trump said he's dropping — for now — his push to deploy National Guard troops in Chicago, Los Angeles and Portland, Oregon, a move that comes after legal roadblocks hung up the effort.

Trump said in a social media post Wednesday that he's removing the Guard troops for now. "We will come back, perhaps in a much different and stronger form, when crime begins to soar again - Only a question of time!" he wrote.

Troops had already left Los Angeles after the president deployed them earlier this year as part of a broader crackdown on crime and immigration. They had been sent to Chicago and Portland but were never on the streets as legal challenges played out.

Pak: India
cannot misuse
Indus Water
Treaty allowance

ISLAMABAD, PTI: Pakistan on Thursday said that India was not allowed to misuse its restricted allowance of water of the western rivers under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi made these remarks at the weekly press briefing, while responding to a question about India's approval of the 260-megawatt Dulhasti Stage-II hydropower project on the Chenab River in Kashmir.

India took a series of punitive measures against Pakistan a day after the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, including putting the 1960 vintage Indus Water Treaty (IWT) in "abeyance."

The IWT, brokered by the World Bank, has governed the distribution and use of the Indus River and its tributaries between India and Pakistan since 1960.

"We have seen these media reports regarding Indian plans to construct the Dulhasti Stage-II hydroelectric [project] on the Chenab River. Obviously, these reports raise serious concerns as no prior information or notification was shared with Pakistan with regard to this project," Andrabi said.

Andrabi also said that Pakistan sought information from India regarding reported projects which it was planning to undertake.

Hindu bizman set on fire in B'desh

Fourth such attack
on the minority
community in the
past two weeks

DHAKA, PTI

A Hindu businessman has been brutally attacked, hacked and set on fire by miscreants in Bangladesh, police said on Thursday.

The victim, identified as 50-year-old Khokon Chandra Das, was assaulted near Keurbhanga Bazar in Damudya in Shariatpur district on Wednesday night while returning home after closing his shop, Bengali daily Prothom Alo reported, quoting police.

He was later shifted to Dhaka for advanced treatment as his condition deteriorated.

Das, who runs a medicine shop and mobile banking business, was travelling in an autorickshaw when the attackers intercepted the vehicle and allegedly beat him up, hacked him with sharp weapons and then poured petrol on his head before setting him on fire, the report said.

In a bid to save himself, Das jumped into a roadside pond, prompting locals to raise an alarm.



Students shout slogans during a protest to condemn the lynching of Hindu garment worker Dipu Chandra Das at Dhaka University in Dhaka. AFP FILE

The attackers fled the scene, police said, adding that he was rescued by locals and taken to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital, before being referred to Dhaka due to the severity of his injuries.

Nazrul Islam, a doctor at the emergency department of Shariatpur Sadar Hospital, said Das suffered multiple injuries across his body, including a serious wound to his abdomen, along with burn injuries on his face, head and hands.

His wife, Seema Das, said the family could not understand why he was targeted. She claimed that his husband recognised two of the attackers, which is why they tried to

kill him.

Damudya Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Rabiul Haque said two men, identified as Rabbi and Sohag, have been named in the case.

"Efforts are underway to arrest them and identify others involved in the attack," he said.

On December 18, a 25-year-old Hindu man, identified as Dipu Chandra Das, was lynched by a mob and his body set on fire over alleged blasphemy in My-mensingh city.

A week later, on Dec 24, another Hindu man, identified as Amrit Mondal, was lynched over alleged extortion in Rajbari town's Pangsha upazila.

RISING ATROCITIES

■ Businessman Khokon Chandra Das, 50, assaulted by a mob while returning home after closing his shop. He escaped by jumping into a pond

■ His wife Seema Das said the attackers tried to kill Chandra Das as he had recognised two people from the group.

■ Two attackers identified, efforts underway to arrest them, say police

Efforts underway
for renewal of
Ganges Treaty

DHAKA, PTI: India and Bangladesh on Thursday began joint water measurement on the Padma and the Ganga rivers as the 30-year Ganges Water Sharing Treaty entered its final year.

Water measurement began at a point 3,500 feet upstream of Hardinge Bridge on the Padma River in Bangladesh and also at the Farakka point on the Ganga river in India, Dhaka Tribune said.

A two-member Indian team, led by Saurabh Kumar, deputy director of India's Central Water Commission (CWC), and Sunny Arora, assistant director of the commission, has arrived in Bangladesh while a four-member Bangladeshi team, headed by Arifin Zubaid, executive engineer of the North-Eastern Measurement Hydrology Division of the Bangladesh Water Development Board, has travelled to India for the joint measurement, it said.

"Given the prevailing situation, we are giving special attention to ensuring the security of the team," said Shibbir Hossain, executive engineer of the hydrology division in Pabna

Fresh clashes kill six in Iran
cost-of-living protests



People walk past stores as the value of the Iranian Rial drops, in Tehran, Iran. REUTERS FILE

banks," Fars said of Lordegan, adding police responded with tear gas.

Fars reported that the buildings were "severely damaged" and that police arrested several people described as "ringleaders". In Azna, Fars said "rioters took advantage of a protest gathering... to attack a police commissariat".

During previous protest movements, state media has labelled demonstrators "rioters".

Earlier Thursday, state television reported that a member of Iran's security forces was killed overnight during protests in the western city of Kouhdasht.

The latest protests began peacefully in the capital and

spread after students from at least 10 universities joined in on Tuesday.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has sought to calm tensions, acknowledging protesters' "legitimate demands", and called on the government on Thursday to take action to improve the economic situation. "From an Islamic perspective... if we do not resolve the issue of people's livelihoods, we will end up in hell," Pezeshkian said at an event broadcast on state television.

Authorities, however, have also promised to take a "firm" stance, and have warned against exploiting the situation to sow chaos.

'128 journalists
killed worldwide
in 2025'

BRUSSELS, AFP: A total of 128 journalists were killed around the world in 2025, more than half of them in the Middle East, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) said Thursday.

The grim toll, up from 2024, "is not just a statistic, it's a global red alert for our colleagues," IFJ general secretary Anthony Bellanger told AFP.

The press group voiced particular alarm over the situation in the Palestinian territories, where it recorded 56 media professionals killed in 2025 as Israel's war with Hamas ground on in Gaza.

(MSF), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), World Vision International and Oxfam, according to a ministry list.

In MSF's case, Israel accused it of having two employees who were members of Palestinian militant groups Islamic Jihad and Hamas.

MSF said this week the request to share a list of its staff "may be in violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law" and

statement.

Several NGOs have said the requirements contravene international humanitarian law or endanger their independence.

Israel says the new regulation aims to prevent bodies it accuses of supporting terrorism from operating in the Palestinian territories.

Prominent humanitarian organisations hit by the ban include Doctors Without Borders

be required to cease operations by March 1.

The United Nations has warned that this will exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in the war-ravaged Palestinian territory.

"Organisations that have failed to meet required security and transparency standards will have their licenses suspended," Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism said in a

Deal to end war
'10%' away, says
Zelenskyy

KYIV, AFP

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Wednesday his country was "10%" away from a deal to end the war with Russia, but cautioned that the most important issues were unresolved and warned against rewarding Moscow.

US-led efforts to end Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II have gained pace in recent weeks, but both sides remain at odds over the key issue of territory in a post-war settlement.

Russia, which occupies around 20% of Ukraine, is pushing for full control of the country's eastern Donbas region as part of a deal — but Kyiv has warned ceding ground will embolden Moscow. In his New Year's Eve address, Zelenskyy said his country wanted an end to the war but not at "any cost", and that any agreement needed strong security guarantees to deter Russia from invading again.

"The peace agreement is 90% ready. Ten percent remains. And that is far more

PEACE BID

■ US-led efforts to end Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II have gained pace in recent weeks.

■ Russia, which occupies around 20% of Ukraine, is pushing for full control of the country's eastern Donbas.

■ Zelenskyy says any deal needed strong security guarantees to deter Russia from invading again.

than just numbers," Zelenskyy said in the address, posted on his Telegram account. "Those are the 10% that will determine the fate of peace, the fate of Ukraine and Europe," he added.

Zelenskyy's speech came just hours after US officials, including top envoy Steve Witkoff, held a call with Ukrainian and European security advisers on the next steps to end the nearly four-year conflict.

Zohran Mamdani sworn in as New York Mayor

NEW YORK, PTI

Zohran Mamdani was formally sworn in as New York City's 112th Mayor in a private ceremony held just moments into the New Year in an old subway station here.

The 34-year-old Indian-descent Queens state assemblyman became the first South Asian and Muslim elected to helm the largest city in the US.

Mamdani was sworn in at the old City Hall subway station at a private ceremony attended only by his family and close advisers, held around the stroke of midnight as the city ushered in the New Year.

He was sworn in on a Quran as the city's 112th mayor — and its second-youngest — by state Attorney General Letitia



Zohran Mamdani is sworn in as mayor of New York City, at Old City Hall Station, New York on Thursday. REUTERS

James on Thursday morning below City Hall Park in a grand, abandoned old subway stop with his wife, artist Rama Duwaji, by his side.

Hours later, a ceremonial inauguration for Mamdani will be held outside City Hall, the

seat of New York City government, on Thursday afternoon where Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont will administer the oath of office to the new Mayor.

Indian-descent Mamdani is the son of renowned filmmaker Mira Nair and Columbia Uni-

WORLD AT A GLANCE



Devotees pray as they sit inside coffins during a ritual believed to rid them of bad luck and bring rebirth for a fresh start in the New Year at Wat Takien temple in Nonthaburi, Thailand, on Thursday. REUTERS

Taiwan prez vows to defend
sovereignty after China drills

► Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te on Thursday vowed to defend the self-ruled island's sovereignty in the face of China's "expansionist ambitions," days after Beijing wrapped up live-fire military drills around the island, reports AP from Taipei.

"In the face of China's rising expansionist ambitions, the international community is watching to see whether the Taiwanese people have the resolve to defend themselves," Lai said in his New Year's address.

"As president, my stance has always been clear: to firmly safeguard national sovereignty, strengthen national defence and the resilience of the whole society, and comprehensively construct an effective deterrence and democratic defence mechanism," he added.



Lai Ching-te.

Lai's comments came days after China wrapped up live-fire drills around Taiwan featuring rocket launches, aircraft and warships. Beijing had expressed anger at a planned US arms sale to Taiwan, as well as at Japan's new leader's comments that Tokyo could intervene in the event of a Chinese attack on Taiwan.

China sees Taiwan as its own territory and threatens to annex it by force if necessary. A former Japanese colony, Taiwan has been governed independently from the mainland since 1949, when the Nationalist Party lost a civil war against the Chinese Communist Party and retreated to island.

Yemen's Aden airport shuts

► Flights at Yemen's Aden international airport were halted on Thursday, the latest sign of a deepening crisis between Gulf powers Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, whose rivalry is reshaping war-torn Yemen, reports Reuters from Dubai.

At the airport — the main international gateway for parts of Yemen outside Houthi control — passengers crowded the terminal, waiting for updates on their flights.

Later on Thursday, Yemeni sources said flights between Aden and all destinations outside

the UAE would resume, though Reuters was unable to confirm that immediately.

Air traffic was shut down due to a row over curbs on flights to the UAE, though there were contradictory accounts of exactly what had happened and who was responsible.

Awadh al-Subaihi said he had been waiting at the airport for a flight to Cairo for medical treatment. "We are suffering, and many other patients and elderly people here are waiting in a difficult situation," he said.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un waving alongside his daughter Kim Ju Ae (L) during a New Year's concert at the May Day Stadium in Pyongyang. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has praised his troops fighting abroad as forging an "invincible alliance" with Russia in a new year's message. AFP

Bolsonaro's 'prison' request binned

► Brazil's Supreme Court has rejected former president Jair Bolsonaro's request to convert his prison sentence for plotting a coup to house arrest, according to a ruling published Thursday, reports AFP from Brasília.

Bolsonaro's lawyers submitted the request Wednesday, citing a "real risk of a sudden worsening" in health for the far-right ex-leader as the

reason to serve his 27-year sentence at home.

Bolsonaro, 70, has been hospitalized for more than a week after undergoing surgery for a groin hernia and then a procedure to treat recurring bouts of hiccups.

"Contrary to what the defense alleges, there has been no worsening of Jair Messias Bolsonaro's health condition," judge said.



Migrants pose for a picture onboard the rescue ship 'Ocean Viking' operated by the NGO SOS Mediterranean, in the search-and-rescue zone of the international waters near Malta, on Thursday. AFP

GST revenue buoyancy continues despite rate cuts

Dec mop-up at Rs 1.74 L cr; refunds surge

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Buoyancy in government revenue continues despite a significant reduction in indirect tax rates on a number of items, as mop-up from GST rose to Rs 1.75 lakh crore in December, which is 2.51% higher when compared with the previous month, as per data released by the Union Finance Ministry on Thursday.

On a year-on-year basis, the gross GST revenue collection was marginally lower. In December 2024, the gross collection was Rs 1.76 lakh crore. This included Rs 12,301 crore in compensation cess.

After adjusting the compensation cess, the revenue collection in December is higher by 6.1% on a year-on-year basis.

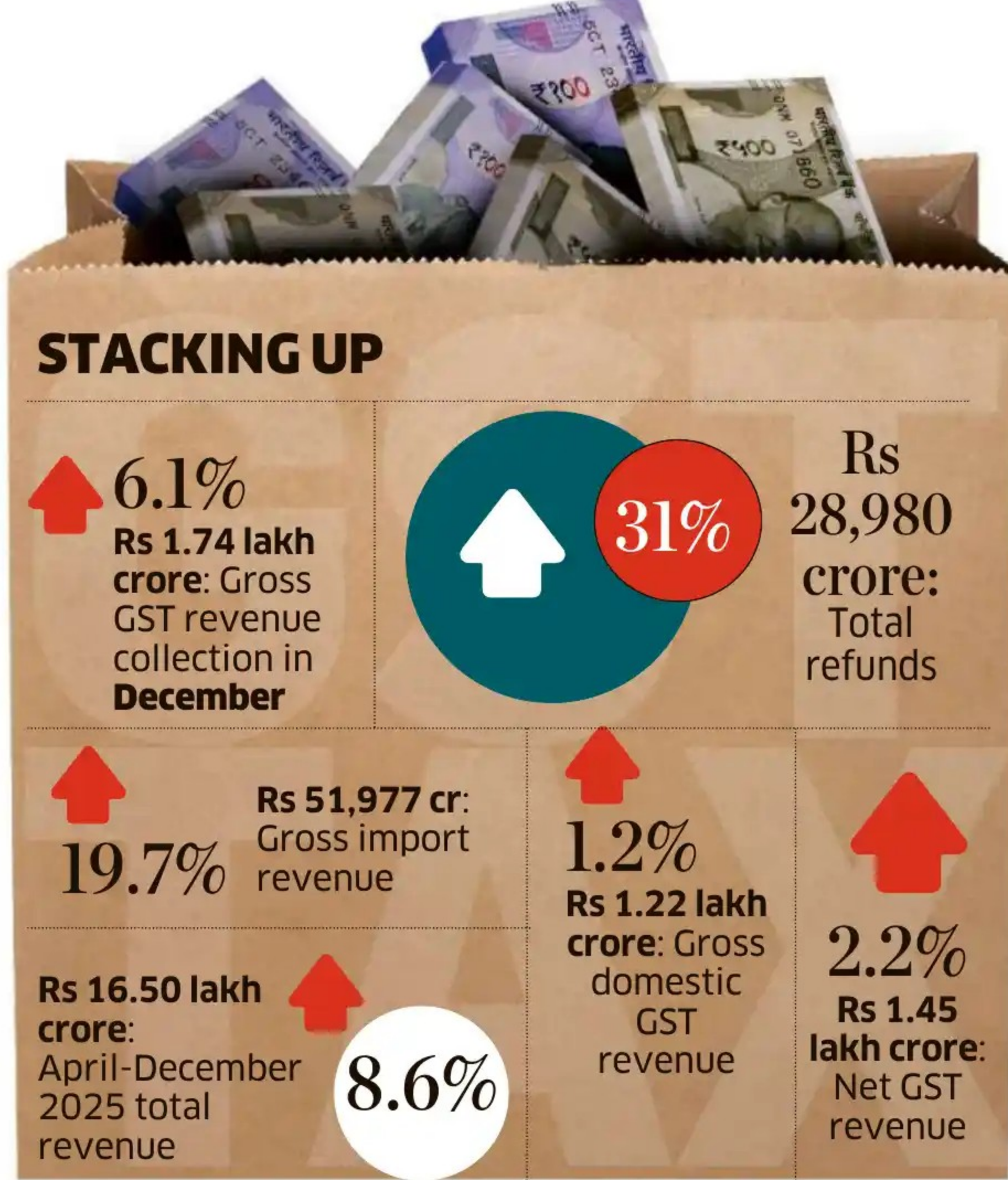
Gross revenue from domestic transactions increased by 1.2% to Rs 1.23 lakh crore, while revenues from imported goods

jumped by 19.7% to Rs 51,977 crore during the month under review.

“GST collections for December 2025 reflect continued revenue buoyancy, underscored by strong festive-season consumption and the positive impact of recent rate rationalisation measures,” said Mahesh Jaising, Partner & Indirect Tax Leader, Deloitte India.

Net GST revenues (after adjusting refunds) stood at over Rs 1.45 lakh crore in December, which is 2.2% higher when compared with the same month last year. There was a sharp jump in refunds. Domestic refunds surged by 62%. However, export refunds were 1.9% lower. Overall, Rs 28,980 crore refunds were claimed in December, which is 30.9% higher year-on-year.

Vivek Jalan, Partner at Tax Connect Advisory Services, said refunds during December jumped as the GST rate ratio-



nalisation resulted in inverted duty structure in many sectors like packaging, farming and pharma.

“All such taxpayers had applied for inverted duty refunds in November 2025 and received the same in December 2025,” Jalan said. Inverted duty structure occurs when the GST rate

on inputs is higher than the rate on outward supplies.

Total GST revenue collection in the April-December period stood at Rs 16.50 lakh crore, which is 8.6% higher than the corresponding period of the previous year.

Analysts had feared a sharp drop in GST revenue following

the implementation of GST 2.0. With effect from September 22, GST rates have been reduced substantially on a number of items including cars, two-wheelers, consumer durables, and daily essentials.

“Despite the steep cut in GST rates earlier this year, a growth of around 6% in gross monthly collection is encouraging, though it’s largely attributable to imports,” said Pratik Jain, Partner, Price Waterhouse & Co LLP.

“If this momentum continues for the remaining months of this fiscal, the YoY growth of around 9% is still possible, which seems to be the target the government might also be looking at,” Jain added.

Data shows wide variation in GST revenue collection among states. While the states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana and Bihar registered high double-digit growth, revenue collection in Delhi, Punjab, Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh was lower when compared with the same month, last year. Karnataka’s GST revenue collection in December was 5% higher at Rs 6,716 crore. Maharashtra posted 15% growth, while it increased by 12% in Gujarat.

PFRDA allows banks to set up pension funds to manage NPS

Seeks to address existing regulatory constraints

NEW DELHI, PTI

The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) on Thursday permitted banks to set up pension funds to manage the government’s flagship National Pension System to enhance competition and safeguard subscriber interests.

Current regulations constrain banks’ participation in sponsoring pension funds.

A pension fund is an intermediary responsible for receiving contributions, accumulating them, and making payments to subscribers as specified by regulations.

The board of PFRDA “has approved, in principle, a framework to permit Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) to independently set up pension funds to manage NPS, with the objective of strengthening the pension ecosystem, enhancing competition and safeguarding subscriber interests”, the reg-

The detailed criteria will be notified separately and will apply to both new and existing pension funds”
-PFRDA

ulator said in a statement.

The proposed framework, it said, seeks to address existing regulatory constraints that had limited bank participation till now, while introducing clearly defined eligibility criteria based on net worth, market capitalisation and prudential soundness in line with RBI norms to ensure that only well-capitalised and systemically robust banks are permitted to sponsor Pension Funds.

“The detailed criteria will be notified separately and will apply to both new and existing pension funds,” PFRDA said.

There are 10 pension funds registered with the regulator. In order to align with evolving realities, aspirations of Indian citizens, international benchmarks and the objective of expanding coverage across corporate, retail and gig-economy segments, while safeguarding subscriber interests, PFRDA has also revised the IMF structure for Pension

Funds with effect from April 1, 2026.

The revised slab-based IMF introduces differentiated rates for government and non-government sector subscribers and shall also apply to schemes under the Multiple Scheme Framework (MSF), with MSF corpus being counted separately.

However, the Annual Regulatory Fee (ARF) of 0.015% payable by pension funds to PFRDA remains unchanged.

The regulator expects the policy reforms to help the subscribers and stakeholders to access a more competitive, well-governed and resilient NPS ecosystem, leading to improved long-term retirement outcomes and enhanced old-age income security.

Meanwhile, PFRDA has appointed three new trustees to the board of the NPS Trust.

The new trustees are Dinesh Kumar Khara, former chairman of SBI; Swati Anil Kulkarni, former executive vice president of UTI AMC; and Arvind Gupta, co-founder and head of Digital India Foundation. Khara has also been designated as the Chairperson of the NPS Trust Board.

NPS has over 9 crore subscribers and AUM of Rs 15.5 lakh crore as of August 31.

Cigarette prices may rise 20% from Feb 1 as excise duty goes up

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The prices of tobacco products like cigarettes and gutkha are set to rise sharply from next month, with the Centre on Thursday notifying imposition of additional excise duty on these products over and above the 40% GST.

A cigarette currently priced at Rs 18 per stick is expected to cost around Rs 21-22 after the new excise duty takes effect. This reflects an increase of nearly 15-20%, depending on how companies pass on the tax burden to consumers.

The Union Finance Ministry has notified fresh excise duties under the Central Excise Act and the Central Excise (Amendment) Act, 2025.

Under the new regime, cigarettes will attract additional excise duties ranging from Rs 2,050 to Rs 8,500 per 1,000 sticks, depending on their length and whether they are filtered. The new rates will be



applicable from February 1.

These taxes will be levied over and above 40% GST on these products.

Share prices of tobacco companies fell sharply after the government’s notification.

ITC tumbled 9.69% to Rs 363.95 at the BSE. It hit a 52-week low of Rs 362.70 in the intra-day trade.

“ITC is set to face near-term margin and volume pressures following the government’s notification of a new excise duty on cigarettes,” Religare Broking said in a note.

However, the brokerage underlined that “ITC’s strong pricing power and diversified business model should support medium-to-long-term earnings resilience”.

According to an explanatory note issued by the Finance Ministry, the move to impose higher taxes are aimed at preventing cigarettes from becoming more affordable at a time when the economic burden of tobacco-related diseases is projected to exceed Rs 2.4 lakh crore annually, as per the Ministry of Health and WHO estimates.

It is “consistent with India’s long-standing policy that tobacco should be taxed heavily relative to other goods, especially given its adverse health externalities and addictive nature,” it said.



Gold to grapes: Quick commerce platforms see strong sales

BENGALURU, DHNS: A Bengaluru shopper picked up two iPhones for Rs 1.8 lakh and nearly one in nine New Year’s Eve orders were placed for friends and family. Swiggy’s quick commerce platform Instamart saw 15x demand for grapes and 7x for cakes. The platform’s co-founder, Phani Kishan, said a Mumbai user received gold worth Rs 1.45 lakh from a loved one.

Unaffected by calls for strikes, Zomato and Blinkit witnessed huge demand on New Year’s Eve as they delivered 75 lakh orders.

Earlier, there was a call for a strike by gig workers on New Year’s Eve, but major delivery platforms said it was business as usual.

Eternal (the parent of Zomato) Founder Deepinder Goyal said support from local law enforcement helped keep the small number of miscreants in check, enabling 4.5 lakh+ delivery partners across both platforms to deliver more than 75 lakh orders (an all-time high) to over 63 lakh customers during the day. He shared on X that this happened without any additional incentives for delivery partners — NYE does see higher incentives than usual days and yesterday was no different than the past NYE days.

He thanked delivery part-

ners, saying they showed up despite intimidation, stood their ground, and chose honest work and progress. “One thought for everyone: if a system were fundamentally unfair, it would not consistently attract and retain so many people who choose to work within it. Please don’t get swept up by narratives pushed by vested interests. The gig economy is one of India’s largest organised job creation engines, and its real impact will compound over time, when delivery partners’ children, supported by stable incomes and education, enter the workforce and help transform our country at scale,” he shared on X.

From grapes, ice, snacks to gold coins, users ordered all items on New Year’s eve on Instagram.

“2025 was a defining year for Instamart and for Quick Commerce in India. As we head into New Year’s Eve, we are seeing strong momentum nationwide. What began as a Tier-1 convenience is becoming urban utility infrastructure, with strong growth coming from Tier-2 and 3 cities. New Year’s Eve once again surprises us with orders beyond essentials as Indian consumers turn to quick commerce platforms for every kind of need,” Instamart CEO Amitesh Jha said.

Carmakers post strong Dec sales on GST reform boost

BENGALURU, DHNS: Carmakers across the board on Thursday reported encouraging sales figures for December 2025, supported by improved buyer sentiment in the wake of the Centre’s GST reforms and festive-season demand.

Maruti Suzuki India reported a 22.21% rise in total sales at 2,17,854 units in December 2025, compared to 1,78,248 units in December 2024. Overall domestic sales, including supplies to Toyota Kirloskar Motor, stood at 1,92,115 units, up from 1,40,829 units a year earlier. Domestic passenger vehicle sales were 1,78,646 units, against 1,30,117 units in the year-ago period, the company said. During the calendar year, Maruti exported 3.95 lakh vehicles — its highest ever — growing over 21% over CY2024.

Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) recorded total sales of 58,702 units in December 2025, including domestic sales of 42,416 units and exports of 16,286 units. “Driven by the positive momentum from GST 2.0 reforms, Hyundai Motor India recorded a robust 6.6% year-on-year growth in total monthly sales for December 2025,” HMIL MD and CEO Tarun Garg said.

Homegrown Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd sold 50,519 units across domestic and international markets in December 2025, up from 44,289 units in December 2024, registering 14.1% growth. Total electric vehi-



cle sales rose 24.2% to 6,906 units, from 5,562 units a year earlier. “For Tata Motors, it was the fifth consecutive year of record-breaking annual sales, with 587,218 units sold, including the highest-ever EV volumes of 81,125 units in a calendar year,” Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles MD and CEO Shailesh Chandra said.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) posted a 33% rise in sales at 39,333 units in December 2025, compared to 29,529 units in December 2024. Domestic sales were 34,157 units, up from 24,887 units a year ago, while exports rose to 5,176 units from 4,642 units. For CY2025, total sales touched 3,88,801 units, up from 3,26,329 units in CY2024—a growth of 19%.

“This sustained performance has been driven by progressive GST reforms, strategic product enhancements and the introduction of new model variants,” TKM Vice-President Varinder Wadhwa said.

Kia India also closed the year on a strong note, posting its best-ever December with sales of 18,659 units—a 105% year-on-year increase — compared to 8,957 units in December 2024.

ATF price reduced by 7%

NEW DELHI, PTI: Price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) was reduced by 7.3% on Thursday, while commercial LPG rate was raised by Rs 111 per cylinder, as state-owned OMCs implemented their monthly price revisions aligned with global fuel benchmarks.

Commenting on the increase in price of commercial LPG cylinders, an Oil Ministry statement said the price of commercial LPG cylinders is linked to international benchmarks.

INSTITUTIONAL ASSET

Crypto in 2026: Domestic policies will be key

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

In 2025, the crypto market witnessed many positive developments from Bitcoin (BTC) reaching an all-time high of above \$126,000, to positive developments on the regulatory side in the US. Crypto exchanges reported an increase in the number of users, and tokenisation moved beyond the conceptual stage during the year. Experts said that domestic policies for countries will be key in shaping investor sentiment in 2026.

Delta Exchange CEO & Co-Founder Pankaj Balani said, 2025 was a historic year for BTC and the crypto markets, marking the transition of crypto from an unorganised asset class to one recognised as an institutional asset class structurally integrated into global finance.

Some positive developments include the GENIUS Act and CLARITY Act that provided significant clarity to investors. “Bitcoin and Ether ETFs, along with digital asset treasury companies, saw strong inflows, with institutional investors now holding close to 30% of the available Bitcoin supply. Rising institutional participation also spurred demand for risk management and hedging instruments such as futures and options, accelerating growth in the derivatives market,” he said.

Giottus.com CEO Vikram Subburaj said by 2026, crypto is expected to increasingly resemble a maturing financial market with a more transparent structure and stronger institutional participation. “The shift is evident in how capital now enters, exits, and settles across the ecosystem. Despite bouts of volatility in 2025, Bitcoin

repeatedly found support near the \$90,000 zone. This reflects deeper liquidity and a more institutional price-discovery process. Another clear structural marker is the scale of regulated inflows,” he said.

Data show that Spot Bitcoin ETFs attracted more than \$6 billion in net inflows in a single month, taking total assets to more than \$70 billion. “This indicates that long-term capital is increasingly participating through compliant channels,” he added.

Binance Head of APAC SB Seker is of the view that the digital asset

industry is transitioning from experimentation to deeper financial integration and maturity. Innovation, regulation, and market infrastructure are increasingly aligned, reshaping global market dynamics.

According to him, clearer regulations and rising institutional participation will reshape the crypto landscape further. In 2026, the industry is set to move beyond hype and speculation toward delivering real, lasting value.

As far as India is concerned, the foundation stone of the CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency)

project could be laid soon. WazirX Founder Nischal Shetty said a clearer regulatory framework for VDAs (Virtual Digital Assets), potentially paired with supportive tax measures, support for stablecoin initiatives alongside CBDC measures, could unlock real-world blockchain use cases from Indian builders to kickstart on-chain growth for Indians.

“While 2025 wasn’t a clean breakout year, it was undeniably transformative. Infrastructure matured, institutional participation widened, and policy debates sharpened worldwide. In 2026, globally, institutional appetite for regulated digital-asset products will continue to increase, driving capital inflows and contributing to market stability. At the same time, domestic policies for countries will be key in shaping their respective investor sentiment,” Shetty added.



Luther wins
feature

KOLKATA RESULTS
Neil Darashah-trained Luther, ridden by Suraj Narredu, won the Deepak Khaitan Memorial Indian Produce Stakes, the feature event of the races on Thursday.
1. So Amazing Cup (Div-I) - 1200M: Live It Love It (Enrico Piperno) Mukesh Kumar 1; Diamond Gold (M S Deora) 2; Cupids Way (Shezad Khan) 3; Blaze In Blue (Nikhik Naidu) 4; Not Run: Tesha. Wb: 5-1/4, 2L, Nk. T: 1-13.72. TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Live It Love It.
2. So Amazing Cup (Div-II) - 1200M: Epic Play (Mrs Samina Akbar) Suraj Narredu 1. Dubai Prince (M S Deora) 2; Memphis (Vaibhav) 3; Schwarzenegger (A Prakash) 4; Wb: 4, 5-1/2, 5L, T: 1-12.81. TB: Neil Darashah. Fav: Epic Play.
3. Academy Gold Cup (Div-I) - 1200M: Romping Home (Daulat Chabria) Suraj Narredu 1; Enola Holmes (Prashant Thapa) 2; Zakua (A Prakash) 3; Sabar (Jagadeesh) 4; Wb: Hd, 4-1/2, 1L, T: 1-11.95. TB: Deepesh Narredu. Fav: Romping Home.
4. Academy Gold Cup (Div-II) - 1200M: Aperl (Ms Ankita) Gaurav Singh 1; Oshnika (A Prakash) 2; Victoria Cross (Vishal Bunde) 3; Knotty Affair (Ashad Asbar) 4; Wb: 2-1/2, 3/4, 5L, T: 1-11.38. TB: Rajender Reddy. Fav: Aperl.
5. Goodfellas Cup - 1400M: Golden Glow (Ms Ankita) Gaurav Singh 1; Shine (A Prakash) 2; Superlative (M S Deora) 3; Ruling Star (M Bhaskar) 4; Wb: Nk, 5, 3L, T: 1-23.72. TB: Rajender Reddy. Fav: Shine.
6. Astounding Cup (Div-I) - 1400M: Polka Dot (Mrs Menaka Gupta) Mukesh Kumar 1; Anjiraha (Hindu Singh) 2; Blinsky Bill (H Arul) 3; True Faith (Tejeshwar) 4; Wb: Snk, Shd, 3/4L, T: 1-25.83. TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Polka Dot.
7. Astounding Cup (Div-II) - 1400M: Ghirardelli (Enrico Piperno) Suraj Narredu 1; Grenoble (A Prakash) 2; Don't stop music (Vikrant) 3; Blue God (Gaurav Singh) 4; Wb: 3-1/4, 1/2L, Nk, T: 1-24.59. TB: Neil Darashah. Fav: Ghirardelli.
8. Deepak Khaitan Memorial Indian Produce Stakes - 1000M: Luther (Shapor Mistry) Suraj Narredu 1; Cosmology (A Prakash) 2; Dreamflight (M S Deora) 3; Cielo (Mukesh Kumar) 4; Wb: 1/2, 3, 7L, T: 1-12.06. TB: Neil Darashah. Fav: Cosmology.
9. Calcutta Bookmakers' Association RCT Gold Vase - 2200M: Main Street (K H Vachha) M S Deora 1; Great Gunse (Mukesh Kumar) 2; King Of Mafia (Vaibhav) 3; Aabhushan (Hindu Singh) 4; Wb: 1-3/4, 2-3/4, 3-3/4L, T: 2-17.92. TB: Arti Doctor. Fav: Charismatic.
10. Multitude Cup (Div-I) - 1100M: Resplendence (Teja Gollapudi) Suraj Narredu 1; Surprise Fantasy (A Prakash) 2; Cash N Run (Vishal Bunde) 3; Marcolini (Ashad Asbar) 4; Wb: Snk, 1-1/4L, Nk, T: 1-05.60. TB: Rajesh Narredu. Fav: Resplendence.
11. Multitude Cup (Div-II) - 1100M: Lavish Girl (Joydeep Paul) Suraj Narredu 1; Princess Peach (Mukesh Kumar) 2; Cashmere Silk (Vishal Bunde) 3; Jim (Hindu Singh) 4; Wb: 3/4, 2-1/2, 1/2L, T: 1-06.20. TB: Vijay Singh. Fav: Lavish Girl.
Bengaluru dividends:
I race: Rs 13w; 13, 14, 20p; Fc Rs 72; Q: Rs 46; Shp: Rs 37; Thp: Rs 46; Tri: Rs 330 & 156; Ex: Rs 1,102 & 369.
II race: Rs 16w; 11, 16, 14p; Fc Rs 72; Q: Rs 58; Shp: Rs 45; Thp: Rs 50; Tri: Rs 148 & 35; Ex: Rs 293 & 159.
III race: Rs 12w; 12, 10, 14p; Fc Rs 23; Q: Rs 26; Shp: Rs 32; Thp: Rs 43; Tri: Rs 277 & 181; Ex: Rs 707 & 313.
IV race: Rs 19w; 11, 18, 10p; Fc Rs 67; Q: Rs 50; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 47; Tri: Rs 159 & 58; Ex: Rs 341 & 195.
V race: Rs 26w; 11, 10, 22p; Fc Rs 40; Q: Rs 20; Shp: Rs 30; Thp: Rs 48; Tri: Rs 178 & 171; Ex: Rs 1,279 & 532.
VI race: Rs 17w; 11, 15, 13p; Fc Rs 39; Q: Rs 31; Shp: Rs 30; Thp: Rs 35; Tri: Rs 118 & 53; Ex: Rs 1,068 & 686.
VII race: Rs 16w; 17, 13, 14p; Fc Rs 83; Q: Rs 54; Shp: Rs 37; Thp: Rs 48; Tri: Rs 484 & 189; Ex: Rs 913 & 252.
VIII race: Rs 23w; 20, 10p; Fc Rs 46; Q: Rs 16; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 26; Tri: Rs 200 & 63; Ex: Rs 243 & 49.
IX race: Rs 98w; 31, 17, 98p; Fc Rs 576; Q: Rs 368; Shp: Rs 50; Thp: Rs 163; Tri: Rs 6,502 & 13,934; Ex: Rs 53,293 (c/o).
X race: Rs 14w; 14, 20, 13p; Fc Rs 50; Q: Rs 29; Shp: Rs 34; Thp: Rs 44; Tri: Rs 268 & 126; Ex: Rs 1,282 & 563.
XI race: Rs 21w; 16, 15, 18p; Fc Rs 41; Q: Rs 19; Shp: Rs 28; Thp: Rs 59; Tri: Rs 442 & 374; Ex: Rs 23,853 & 20,445.
Jockey: Rs 3,191 (196).
Runner-up: Rs 544 (493).
II treble: Rs 102 (167).
II treble: Rs 293 (203).
III treble: Rs 298 (306).

Para-athlete Simran, whose
guide flunked dope test,
included in core group

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

In what appears to be a shoddy work by the Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) of the Sports Authority of India, provisionally suspended wrestler Reetika Hooda's name appeared in the updated TOPS core list before the government body scurried to claim that she has now been dropped from the list.
The much-awaited TOPS or Target Olympic Podium Scheme list (a flagship programme of the sports ministry to support elite athletes with medal potential for Olympics/Paralympics and is overseen by MOC) for 2026 was released on New Year's Eve with plenty of athletes hoping to see their names included or re-included in the list with the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games coming up later in the season.
The TOPS list — which consists of core and development athletes separately — ignored several key performers from 2025 while Asian Championships silver medallist Reetika, who was provisionally suspended for a prohibited substance during an in-competition test last July and awaits a judgement, was included in the list.
When *DH* reached out to SAI for clarity on the matter,

an official, on preferred to remain anonymous, confirmed that Reetika's name was included in the list by mistake and has now been dropped.
At the time of writing this report, the updated list was yet to be made public as Reetika's name appears in the TOPS core list — consisting of 57 able-bodied and 61 para athletes — on SAI's official website. The much bigger development list consisted of 130 able-bodied athletes.
It's also worth mentioning that para-athlete Simran Sharma, who lost her World Athletics Para Championships medals after her guide flunked the dope test, was also included in the core group list.
Athletes listed in the core list are entitled to a monthly out-of-pocket allowance of Rs 50,000, along with provisions for foreign coaching, training, equipment, medical insurance for injury treatment overseas among other perks. Development athletes are provided Rs 25,000 along with the above-mentioned facilities.
Among the major names added to the core list were javelin thrower Sachin Yadav, who finished fourth at the World Athletics Championships last year, making him the only javelin thrower in the list after Neeraj Chopra.



Reetika Hooda (left) is provisionally suspended by NADA since last July following an in-competition positive test. DH FILE PHOTO

Karnataka's Dhinidhi in development list;
Pranavi, Avani, Fouaad in TAGG

Interestingly, the men's 100m runners, including Karnataka's fastest sprinter Manikanta Hoblidhar, were not kept in the development list despite the medal chances in the relay event at the Asian Games. Leading women's sprinters, including State's SS Sneha, did make the list, reports Aditya K Halder.
Among other Karnataka names, none made the core

list but six names made the development list while three further made the Target Asian Games Group list (TAGG) list.
Only one Karnataka swimmer, Dhinidhi Desinghu, was considered for the development list while the likes of Srihari Nataraj were not included despite medals galore at the Asian Aquatics Championships last October.

Among shooters, newly-crowned 3-P rifle national champion Tilottama Sen was included while golfers Pranavi Urs and Avani Prashanth were added in the TAGG list.
Karnataka athletes in TOPS list: Development athletes: Dhinidhi Desinghu (swimming), Ayush Shetty (badminton), Sneha SS (athletics), Tilottama Sen (shooting), Divya TS (shooting), Yashaswini Choprade (TT).
TAGG list: Fouaad Mirza (equestrian), Pranavi Urs (golf), Avani Prashanth (golf).

Sabalenka for 'Battle of the Sexes' rematch & revenge on Kyrgios



Aryna Sabalenka (left), her goddaughter Nicole, and Nick Kyrgios after the Battle of the Sexes exhibition match in Dubai late last month. AFP

BRISBANE, AFP: World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka on Thursday said she wants a rematch of her "Battle of the Sexes" showdown with Nick Kyrgios so she can get revenge.
Australia's Kyrgios beat the Belarusian 6-3, 6-3 in a highly-publicised showdown in Dubai last Sunday, with modified rules that divided fans.
Sabalenka's side of the court was reduced in size by nine percent in an attempt to restrict Kyrgios' power and speed advantage, while each player only received one serve.
"I think I would definitely

do it again," she said ahead of the Brisbane International, her season-opening tournament as she prepares for the Australian Open on January 18.
"I love revenge and I don't like to leave it the way it is."
While keen to face-off with Kyrgios again, Sabalenka said she would want a full court and two serves.
"I think for the next match we will come up with a different format," she said.
"Before the match I didn't realise I would have to adjust and it was a bit tricky for me. I think I would keep the full court but

I would take two serves. That would even our level a lot more.
"I always say that when you are losing, you are learning and I learned a lot about his game," she added. "I would do it again. I need revenge."
The contest bore little resemblance to the era-defining 1973 "Battle of the Sexes" encounter between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs.
Back then, there was more at stake with the nascent women's professional tour, set up by King, fighting for legitimacy and prize money for female players far lower than for the men.

Coach Maresca
leaves Chelsea

Italian was in charge
of the Blues for
18 months

LONDON, AFP



Enzo Maresca

Enzo Maresca has left his role as Chelsea head coach after 18 months in charge, the Premier League club announced Thursday.
"Chelsea Football Club and head coach Enzo Maresca have parted company," said a club statement.
The Italian's exit from Stamford Bridge comes with the club fifth in the Premier League table -- 15 points adrift of leaders and London rivals Arsenal -- with one win in their last seven top-flight games.
Speculation about Maresca's position increased during Chelsea's poor run of recent results amid reports of a worsening relationship between the coach and the club's hierarchy.
"With key objectives still to play for across four competitions including qualification for Champions League football, Enzo and the club believe a change gives the team the best chance of getting the season back on track," said the club statement.
Maresca did not attend the post-match press conference following a frantic 2-2 draw with Bournemouth on Tuesday, although his absence was attributed to illness.
Maresca's decision to substitute Cole Palmer just after the hour mark during the Bournemouth game was booed by Chelsea fans.
The draw meant Chelsea

had dropped 13 points at home from winning positions this season -- the bulk of the 15-point deficit between the Blues and Arsenal.
Maresca has stood by comments made on December 13 after a league win at home to Everton when he said many people at Chelsea "didn't support me and the team".
He repeatedly refused to clarify the comments, although he insisted they were not an attack on the club's supporters.
The 45-year-old said the days leading up to the 2-0 victory over Everton were "the worst 48 hours" of his time at Chelsea.
Maresca's stock at Chelsea was high after the Blues beat Barcelona 3-0 in the Champions League in November.
But damaging defeats by Leeds, Atalanta and Villa increased the pressure on the Blues boss.
Maresca's contract had been due to run until the summer of 2029, with a club option of a further year.
The former Leicester manager was appointed as successor to Mauricio Pochettino in June 2024.

Tsitsipas considered quitting tennis

PERTH, AFP: Stefanos Tsitsipas (in pic) said on Thursday he seriously considered retiring from tennis in the depths of a struggle with serious back pain during much of the 2025 season.
But the former world No. 3, now ranked 36th after playing just two Davis Cup matches since a second-round exit at the US Open, said his ongoing medical treatment appeared to be paying dividends.
"I'm most excited to see how my actual training responds with regard to my back," the 27-year-old said as he prepared to open his 2026 campaign for Greece at the

mixed-teams United Cup in Perth, Australia.
"My biggest concern was if I could finish a match," added the 2023 Australian Open finalist, who said the injury haunted him "for the last six or eight months".
"I would ask: 'Can I play another match without pain?'"
"I got really scared after the US Open loss (to Germany's Daniel Altmaier). I could not walk for two days. That's when you reconsider the future of your career."
Tsitsipas said that after various medical consultations he was now satisfied with his current care plan.



**BENGALURU EAST CITY CORPORATION**
Office of the Commissioner, RHB Colony,
Mahadevapura, Bangalore-560048.

No: Addl.Com.(Dev) /PR/20/2025-26
Date: 30.12.2025

NOTIFICATION

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISORY TO ALL PAYING GUEST (PG) SERVICE APARTMENT AND HOSTEL ESTABLISHMENTS IN BENGALURU.

Ref : In continuation with public notice issued vide ref-GBA/HO/PR/17/2025-26, DATED: 29/10/2025.
In view of the recent tragic gas blast/ fire incident reported at a Paying Guest (PG), service apartment and hostel accommodation in the city, resulting in loss of life and serious injuries, the Greater Bangalore Authority (GBA) expresses deep concern and reiterates its commitment to public safety and prevention of such incidents.
In the interest of public health and safety, all service apartment, hostel and PG owners / operators /managers within the jurisdiction of BECC are hereby directed to immediately review, rectify & ensure strict compliance with all prescribed safety protocols, including but not limited to:
1. Safe and authorized use of LPG/gas connections
2. Prohibition of illegal or unsafe gas cylinders
3. Proper ventilation and fire safety measures
4. Functional fire extinguishers and emergency exits
5. Electrical safety and avoidance of overloading
6. Valid and subsisting Trade License and registrations
TIME GRANTED:
All service apartment, hostel & PG establishments are granted **SEVEN (7) DAYS** from the date of this press statement to set right all safety deficiencies & ensure full compliance with applicable laws & license conditions.
INSPECTION & ENFORCEMENT :
1. After the expiry of the above period:
2. Special inspection drives will be conducted by BECC officers (public health)
3. Strict action will be initiated against non-compliant Pgs.
PENAL ACTION :
Failure to comply will result in:
1. Closure/sealing of premises
2. Cancellation or suspension of Trade License
3. Penal action under the Greater Bangalore Authority Act, 2024 and other applicable laws
4. Initiation of prosecution wherever violations endanger life & safety
The BECC urges all service apartment, hostel and PG owners to treat this directive with utmost seriousness and cooperate fully in safeguarding residents and the public at large.
Public safety is non-negotiable. Issued in public interest.

Sd/- Commissioner, BECC

KODAGU INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, MADIKERI
(Government of Karnataka - Reg Autonomous Institute)
Phone: 08272 238220 Website: www.kimskodagu.karnataka.gov.in
Ref.No: DME-2025-26/SE030
Date: 31.12.2025

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Under signed Invites e-tender notification in two Bid system from eligible tenderers through e-procurement portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> GOK, for the supply of Diet food to inpatients of teaching hospital, KoIMS, Madikeri. Applications can be down loaded from **01.01.2026**, last date for upload is **30.01.2026**, for more information contact e-procurement portal or office of the undersigned.
e-mail: directormckodagu@gmail.com
Dean & Director, KoIMS, Madikeri

**Government of Karnataka**
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND SPORTS
State Youth Centre, Nrupathunga Road, Bengaluru - 560001.
Tel : 080-22215601, 22211246, Fax: 080 22215602

No: DYES/SMC/67/2024-25
Date: 31.12.2025

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through E-Procurement Portal Only)

Subject:- Inviting tender for operation of Hotel/Restaurant at Sree Kanteerava Outdoor Stadium Premises, Bangalore.
Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports invites a tender for operation of Hotel at Sree Kanteerava Outdoor Stadium Premises, Bangalore for a period of 10 years from the eligible bidders through E-Procurement Portal under Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act, 1999 (KTPP Act) and Rules 2000.
Particulars : 1) BID Amount : **Rs. 1,65,680/-** 2) EMD : **Rs. 41,442/-**, 3) Tender Inviting Authority : Deputy Director (Administration) Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports State Youth Centre, Nrupatunga Road Bangalore 560001. 4) Tender accepting authority : Commissioner, Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports Nrupatunga Road, Bangalore 560001. 5) Appellate Authority : Secretary to Government Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, Nrupatunga Road, Bangalore 560001. 6) Last date for submission of application : **15-01-2026**. 7) Opening of technical bid : **16-01-2026**. 8) Opening of financial Price bid : **23-01-2026**. 9) Place of tender opening and for additional information : Office of the Commissioner, Youth Empowerment and Sports State Youth Center, Nrupatunga Road, Bangalore-560001. Phone Number: 080-22215601/02.
The Tender should be submitted through e-Procurement Portal (<https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>). Tenderers need to register in the e-Procurement Portal to submit their bids online. The tender document can be viewed free of cost from the e-Procurement Portal. Additional information may be obtained during office hours at the above mentioned Address.
Sd/- Deputy Director (Administration) Dept. of Youth Empowerment and Sports

DIPR/CP/4779/NR/2025-26

Government of Karnataka - Karnataka Forest Department
Office of the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Sagar Forest Division, Sagar – 577401
Ph.: 08183 226071 e-mail: dcfsagar123@gmail.com
No.: B5/SAS/e-Auction/CR-11/2025-26/3 Date: 18.12.2025
Brief Tender Notice Regarding Disposal of Forest Produce like Timber/Fire Wood/Billets/Poles Through e-Auction
Date is fixed on 08.01.2026 and 09.01.2026 for disposal through e-Auction of Forest Produce like Timber/Fire Wood/Billets/Poles available in the Govt. Timber Depot of Sagar, Shikaripura, Anavatti and Hosanagara coming under the limits of Sagar Forest Division. The said e-auction sale Notice was published in letter of this office even No.: B5/SAS/e-Auction/CR-11/2025-26 Date:18.12.2025 and interested purchasers can participate in the e-Auction subject to all the conditions mentioned in the said Notice and purchase the Lots put up for auction.
Further details regarding information related to e-Auction can be obtained through Karnataka Government's Official website www.mstcecommrce.com and www.etimber.in
Sd/- Deputy Conservator of Forests, Sagar Forest Division, Sagar
DIPR/smg/KSMCA/25-26/03/01/1508

Government of Karnataka
Department of Archaeology, Museum and Heritage, Mysore.
Notification Number: DAMH/CW/T-26/2025-26
Date: 29.12.2025

On behalf of the Governor, Government of Karnataka, the department of Archaeology, Museum and Heritage, Mysuru has invited the itemwise tender for the 30 works of DAMH/2025-26:OW/WORK_INDENT-146 to 151, 153 to 162, 164, 167 to 179 under the standard tender documents KW-1, 2, & 3. The amount of minimum Rs.16.00lakhs to Maximum Rs.100.00lakhs kept for these tenders as per Standard Tender bid Document. Tender documents can be obtained through (<https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/>) e-portal from date 29.12.2025 onwards. Last date for clarification regarding the work Date: 09.01.2026, 17.00 hrs. Last Date for Submission of Application Date: 16.01.2026, 16.00 hrs. Date for Technical bid Opening Date: 19.01.2026, 16.30 hrs. Date for Financial bid opening Date: 21.01.2026, 11.00 hrs
Sd/- Commissioner, Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage, Mysore.
DIPR/DDMYS/1452/KSMCA/825/2025-26

**KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED**
(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)
TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Mode Only)

No: SEE/TR(P)/BRC/EE(O)/AEE-(c)/2025-26/2420 Dtd: 31.12.2025.
KPTCL invites bid against enquiry no: KPTCL/SEE/TR(P)/BRC/EE(O)/AEE(C)/2025-26/EPR-4 dtd: 20.09.2025 for Capital Civil Work Providing property fencing to the proposed 66/11 kv sub-station land at N.Vaddahalli, Mulabagal Tq, Kolar Dist.Amount Put to Tender: Rs.6.20 Lakhs. Cat: (Others) – 3rd call.
The detailed information regarding subject enquiry in KPP portal can be obtained by logging on or after **05.01.2026** to <https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in> with hyper Link "E Procurement KPTCL" or to <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Ele.), Transmission (Projects) Rural Circle, Opp. R.R. Nagar metro station, Pantharapalya Mysore Road, Bengaluru –26.

**ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಕೊಳಗೇರಿ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಮಂಡಳಿ**
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಧಾರವಾಡ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ, ಧಾರವಾಡ. ದೂರವಾಣಿ: 0836-2747842
E-mail: kdsb.dhrdiv@gmail.com

ಸಂ. ಕಕೊಅಮ/ಕಾಮಾಅ/ಧಾ.ವಿ/ತಂ.ಕಾ/ಬೆಂ.ಪ್ರ./2025-26/866 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 30.12.2025

ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಬೆಂಚರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಕೊಳಗೇರಿ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಮಂಡಳಿ, ಧಾರವಾಡ ವಿಭಾಗ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬರುವ ಧಾರವಾಡ ಉಪವಿಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ ಸರ್ವೆ ಕ್ರಿಯಾ Infrastructure works - 112 Houses for the Construction of 976 Houses including infrastructure works for slum dwellers of Dharwad West assembly Constituency of Dhawad City under PMAY(U) - HFA Scheme. KSDB/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT368 ಮಂಜೂರಾದ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯನ್ನು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಲು ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಅರ್ಹ ಸಿವಿಲ್ ನೃಪತಿಗಾರರಿಂದ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಕರೆಯುವ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರೋಡ್‌ಸೆಲೆಕ್ಷನ್ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಿಂದ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಅರ್ಹ ನೃಪತಿಗಾರರಿಂದ ಐಟಿಎಂಎಸ್ ಬೆಂಚರ್‌ನ್ನು ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರ/ ವಿಚಾರಕ್ಕೆ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರಿಂಗ್‌ಮಾಂಟ್‌ನ <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> ನಿಂದ ಬೆಂಚರ್ ವಾತವೀಕರಣ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 01.01.2026 ರಿಂದ ಧೇನುರೋಡ್ ಮಹಾಕೋಡು ಬೆಂಚರ್‌ನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೋನಿಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 13.01.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 5.00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ ಸ್ವೀಕೃತವಾದ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್‌ನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 15.01.2026 ರಂದು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ ತೆರೆಯಲಾಗುವುದು.
ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.100.00 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳ 1 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ ಇದ್ದು, ಬೆಂಚರ್‌ನ ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ ನೃಪತಿಗಾರರ ಅರ್ಹತೆ/ಬೆಂಚರ್‌ನ ನಿಯಮ/ಬೆಂಚರ್ ಶುಲ್ಕ ತುಂಬುವ ವಿಧಾನ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> ಮೂಲಕ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು ಅಥವಾ ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಸಹಿ ಮಾಡಿದವರ ಕಛೇರಿ ದಿನಗಳಂದು ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದು.
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಕೊಳಗೇರಿ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಮಂಡಳಿ, ಧಾರವಾಡ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಧಾರವಾಡ.

ವಾಸಾಸಂ/ಧಾ/ವಿ/ತಾ/1049/2025-26



Vyom Naidu

In-form Vyom slams 283; Saatvik, Gaurav score tons

BENGALURU, DHNS: Vyom Naidu continued his fine form by scoring a 150-ball 283 to power Vidyanketan School to a massive 410-run win over Carmel School in at the KSCA Under-14 School Division II tournament for the BT Ramaiah Shield here.

Elsewhere, Saatvik Sanikop and Gaurav Jeevan hammered centuries to help St Paul's English School coast to a 520-run victory over Florence Public School.

While Saatvik blasted 167 runs in 91 balls, Gaurav remained unbeaten on 149 off 65 balls. The duo's batting show seemed to have rubbed off on team-mates Avyukkh N Rao (83) and Vipin S (64) who added their own half-centuries to take St. Paul's English School to a grand total of 587 for six in 50 overs.

The bowlers - Nihal Gowda N (4/17), Praneek Dhiraj (3/13) and VS Vedhanth (3/13) -- then heaped more misery on Florence Public School before skittling them for a mere 67 in 15.5 overs.

Brief scores: St. Paul's English School: 587/6 in 50 overs (Avyukkh N Rao 83, Vihaan Darshan Payappanavar 27, Saatvik Sanikop 167, Gaurav Jeevan 149 n.o., Vipin S 64; Syed Umar Basheer 2-99, M Vazeer Ahmed 2-85) bt Florence Public School: 67 all out in 15.5 overs (Praneek Dhiraj 3-13, Nihal Gowda N 4-17, VS Vedhanth 3-13). Vidyanketan School: 504/4 in 50 overs (Vyom Naidu 283, Ved Nahar 49, Aryan Pradeep 69, Yug Vishal Rao 41 n.o., Rajveer Prasad 2-73) bt Carmel School: 94 all out in 20.5 overs (Vismay N Murthy 43; Ved Nahar 3-18, Vyom Naidu 3-14). National Public School, B-61: 84 all out in 21.4 overs (Saarish D Prakash 38; Neev Jain K 2-13, Nabeel Danish Patel 2-25) lt to Bishop Cotton Boys School: 86/0 in 8.5 overs (Reyes Raj Madhusudan 45 n.o.). Sri Sri Ravishankar Vidyamandir, East: 132 all out in 43 overs (J Mirnank 2-15, Anikith R 5-24) bt Vidyanketan Public School, B-56: 52 all out in 31.1 overs (Kodatala Sai Shrivani Reddy 2-12, Atiksh Singh 3-10, Daiwick Pradeep Sharma 5-15). Clarence Public School, JP Nagar: 159 all out in 48 overs (Aryamohan K 83 n.o.; Arnay Thakur 4-33, Vipagunta Venkata Ananta Arnay 3-18) bt Delhi Public School, Whitefield: 96 all out in 37.3 overs (C Jaidev 3-16, Manthan 3-23). Presidency School, North: 157 all out in 49.3 overs (Samyak 62, Shaan M Begur 48; Yug Sinh Jadeja 2-27, Devvirat Olla 3-33) lt to Inventure Academy: 158/0 in 31.4 overs (Yug Sinh Jadeja 64 n.o., Atharv Shrivastav 64 n.o.).

Triveni Memorial Educational Trust: 270/6 in 50 overs (Lagan Gangajiah Gowda 34, Sheshan BH 50, Samrudh S 73, Anirudh Biradar 2-40, Tanush V Prabhu 2-42) bt BGS International Residential School: 184 all out in 43.3 overs (Daivik Gowda GB 30, Anirudh Biradar 38, Kundan V 30, Mohith Gowda HD 35; Lijesh Yoglish Sallian 3-13, Agartha GS 2-40, Yashraj A 2-31).

Tigers edge Pipers in thriller

RANCHI, PTI: Shrachi Bengal Tigers held their nerve in a dramatic match as they edged past SG Pipers in a shootout after the two sides were locked at 3-3 at the end of regulation time in the Women's Hockey India League here on Thursday.

Lalremisiami's sudden-death conversion in the shootout sealed the bonus point after a pulsating contest.

Agustina Gorzelany (6th, 18th minutes) and Lalremisiami (11th) netted for the Tigers in the regulation time, while Lola Riera (10th, 60th) and Sunelita Toppo (59th) scored for the SG Pipers.

The Tigers started aggressively with an early circle entry, but SG Pipers absorbed the pressure and responded with swift passing. Tigers soon earned back-to-back penalty corners and converted the second through Gorzelany (6th).

ON TV

HOCKEY
HIL: Ranchi Royals vs Soorma Hockey Club (women, 7:30 pm).
LIVE on Sony Sports Network.

Waiver of participation fee among top demands

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

A day after All India Football Federation (AIFF) requested clubs to confirm their participation and finalise a format for the much-delayed Indian Super League season, the clubs responded by seeking a waiver on the participation fee, along with a host of other crucial requests, before agreeing to

the governing body's request. Citing the National Sports Governance Act, which came into effect partially on New Year's Day, the clubs requested that the proposed participation fee of Rs 1 crore per club, which could increase to Rs 2.5 crore for the already-truncated season, while showing continued concern for the lack of commercial partners.

"With regard to the proposed truncated format, the absence of a settled commercial revenue model, and the requirement under the NSGA to avoid disproportionate or arbitrary financial burdens on regulated entities, there shall be no participation fee payable by clubs for the 2025-26 season," read the letter under-



signed all ISL Clubs, barring Jamshedpur FC, who are the only ones to have confirmed participation.

As reported earlier, AIFF projected a yearly operational cost of Rs 70 crore to run a season while suggesting a revenue model of 10-50-40 ratio among AIFF, clubs and commercial partners. However, the cost

estimation of the shortened season in the proposed format over two centralised venues already threatens to exceed the budget.

While the clubs, who earlier felt optimistic upon sharing of the revenue model, started to feel concerned and AIFF's Wednesday's request to confirm participation and league format only aggravated their worries. The clubs have now urged the federation to foot the bill for operational and majority of the 'league-level cost alone.

"In the absence of an appointed commercial partner and/or broadcaster, and until such time as commercial rights are formally transferred or monetised, the AIFF -- being

the rights holder and operator of the league -- shall assume financial responsibility for league-level organisational and operational costs for the 2025-26 season..." read the letter.

"The majority of league-level costs required to deliver the 2025-26 season shall be borne by the AIFF, with clubs continuing to meet only their respective team-related and routine operational expenses, ensuring that clubs are not exposed to indeterminate or open-ended financial liabilities."

Commercial partner

Further, the clubs requested clarity and accountability from the AIFF on their 20-year plan

by appointing a commercial partner, broadcaster and also finalise the league's revenue, governance and risk-sharing framework.

AIFF has resumed its hunt for a new commercial partner in accordance with their new proposal and a new tender could be out by mid-January after the overly-ambitious previous tender found no takers.

Clubs, meanwhile, also requested AIFF to seek commercial and institutional support from the central government to help sustain the interim season in consistency with the NSGA's act of "recognition of government facilitation to preserve institutional continuity and sporting integrity".



Vladimir Kramnik, FIDE

Kramnik sues world chess body for defamation

NEW DELHI, PTI: Russian chess great Vladimir Kramnik has sued world chess governing body FIDE for defamation in a Swiss civil court after he became the subject of an inquiry for allegedly harassing players with "unsubstantiated" cheating claims following the death of American Grandmaster Daniel Naroditsky.

Kramnik posted on 'X' that he has been forced to take the legal route after being relentlessly attacked by fellow players and FIDE, whose CEO Emil Sutovsky described Kramnik's allegations of cheating against Naroditsky as "appalling and outright shameful".

The exact cause of 29-year-old Naroditsky's death is not known but in his last livestream, he talked about being under immense mental stress over the allegations levelled by Kramnik.

Czech Grandmaster David Navara has also claimed to have felt distressed and suicidal due to Kramnik's online cheating charge against him. The defiant Russian has, however, maintained that he has not spoken without basis.

"I have initiated formal legal proceedings against FIDE in accordance with Swiss law in the Court of Lausanne. Under the applicable Swiss procedural rules, an obligatory preliminary procedure must first take place. This phase typically lasts 2-3 months," the former world champion said.



Pat Cummins

Aussies announce spin-heavy squad

MELBOURNE, AFP

Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood were on Thursday named in a spin-heavy provisional Australian squad for this year's Twenty20 World Cup after their Ashes campaign was ruined by injury.

Test skipper Cummins only played one of the five Ashes Tests against England, in Adelaide, as he slowly recovers from a lower back issue, while Hazlewood (Achilles) missed the entire series.

Cummins will have another scan on his back later this month to determine whether he will be fit for the tournament in India and Sri Lanka beginning on February 7.

Hazlewood and big-hitter Tim David (hamstring) are also on the comeback trail, but are expected to be ready. "Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Tim David are tracking well and we are confident they will be available for the World Cup," chief selector George Bailey said.

"This is a preliminary squad so should changes need to be made they will ahead of the support period."

Left-arm spinners Matt Kuhnemann and Cooper Connolly were additions to a largely settled 15-man squad, alongside chief tweaker Adam Zampa and part-timer Glenn Maxwell.

Australia's group-stage matches are all being played in Sri Lanka with the expectation of spin-friendly surfaces.

In a surprise, Australia opted against a back-up wicket-keeper for Josh Inglis and no left-arm pace replacement for Mitchell Starc, who has retired from the 20-over game. The fast-bowling attack is led by Cummins and Hazlewood, along with Nathan Ellis and Xavier Bartlett, plus all-rounders Cameron Green and Marcus Stoinis. All are right-handers.

Australia open their account on February 11 in Colombo against Ireland.

Preliminary squad: Mitchell Marsh (capt), Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Cameron Green, Nathan Ellis, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhnemann, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Short, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa

Nicholas to take over as India women's S&C coach after WPL

NEW DELHI, PTI: Englishman Nicholas Lee will take over as the new strength and conditioning coach of the Indian women's cricket team after the conclusion of the Women's Premier League.

The five-team Women's Premier League is scheduled to be held from January 9 to February 5 in Navi Mumbai and Vadodra.

"Lee will take over as the new strength and conditioning coach of the Indian women's cricket team after the WPL," a source told on Thursday.

Following the WPL, India are slated to tour Australia for a multi-format series from February 15 to March 9.

Lee, who scored 490 runs in 13 first-class matches as a right-handed batter, brings with him vast experience in elite sport, having most recently served as the strength and conditioning coach of the Gulf Giants in the fourth season of the UAE's International League T20.

He was the strength and conditioning coach of Afghanistan's men's team from January 2024 to December 2025 and earlier served as head of physical performance at the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) from March 2020 to January 2024.

A graduate of Anglia Ruskin University, Lee also worked as the strength and conditioning trainer at Sussex County Cricket Club from March 2012 to September 2016, having earlier served in an assistant role from January 2010 to March 2012.

'Want to be bridge between players & administrators'

KBA's first woman office-bearer Nischitha to look into shuttlers' issues

HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Badminton was love at first sight for GM Nischitha, but at a tender age of eight, little did she realise the influence the sport would have on her future life.

Holding a racquet for the first time, the Bengaluru girl went on to become the first from Karnataka to wear a double crown (girls' singles and doubles) at the under-13 badminton Nationals in 2001. Nischitha, along with partner Varsha Belawadi, is also the first to claim eight senior State women's doubles titles in a row.

After becoming the first female from Karnataka to clear the BWF coach level 1 certification, Nischitha, now a mother to a child, was the first female from the State to be named the chief coach for the Indian team for the junior Asian Badminton Championships in 2017.

The former international player, who holds an engineering degree, has now added another feat to this growing list of firsts during her 28-year association with badminton.

On Sunday, the 36-year-old became the first woman to be elected to the Karnataka Badminton Association's executive committee.

As the first and only woman contestant among 24, Nischitha garnered 337 votes to finish fifth to be appointed the treasurer with Kumar S Bangarappa as the president and V Muralidhar as the secretary.

"I have done it all and it was time to make some changes in the system," Nischitha tells DH.

"That's why I made this de-

cision. Because as a player or as a coach we are helpless. But being a part of the association gives you a certain amount of power. Power to make changes in the right direction."

Whether it is the second-hand treatment some players are subjected to or the disrespect a few coaches live through, the Bengaluru girl has been through bitter experiences and more.

"There is a big gap between the players/ coaches and the association which often leads to miscommunication and badminton in Karnataka ultimately suffers. I want to bridge that gap.

"As simple as providing quality shuttles to district associations when they conduct tournaments. Or be it the kit-

ting, the TA/DA (travelling allowance and dearness allowance) for the State team, and the cash rewards during State championships.

More often than not, the quality is below par and incentives inadequate. Selecting State teams is another issue, it has to become more transparent and keep away from politics," she says.

Known for her aggressive play on court, those close to her vouch for Nischitha's no-nonsense attitude.

Such qualities and her constant contribution to Karnataka badminton both as a player and coach perhaps impressed the KBA members to choose Nischitha as their representative in the State's badminton body.



Former badminton international GM Nischitha became the first woman office-bearer of the Karnataka Badminton Association when she was elected the treasurer on Sunday.

Anjana bags two bronze medals

BENGALURU, DHNS: Anjana Rao secured two bronze medals in the Women's over-40 singles and doubles competitions at the US Open Table Tennis Championships at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, held from

December 16 to 21. In the over-40 singles event, Anjana, younger sister of former Karnataka TT player Archana, beat Margit Geiger 11-4, 11-7, 11-5 but went down to Hui Zhao 11-9, 11-7, 11-9 in the semifinals. In the doubles event, Anjana and Divya Nagaraj lost to J Li and H Jin 13-11, 11-8, 11-7 in the semis.



Anjana Rao

Brief scores: At IAF: Poorna Vikasa Vidyalaya: 220/7 in 50 overs (Sachith Shetty 79, P Lithik Reddy 41, Pranil Kenganur 5/41) bt Delhi Public School, North: 121 all out in 48.3 overs (Tanush Mishra 42, Gagan Y 2/28, Jaipreeth 4-20, Hemant Chandra Shekar 2-26). At MVIT (I): Max Muller High School: 114 all out in 48.1 overs (Athreya Bhat 32, Ashwath Nagarajan 2-15, Vishist PJ 4-13) lt to Delhi Public School, East: 118/5 in 38 overs (Anirudh Venkata Rayasam 40; Rajveer Padam Mehta 2-30).

Ashwin worried about ODIs

CHENNAI, PTI

The One-Day International format will struggle for survival and relevance after the 2027 World Cup once its bonafide greats Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma decide to call time, says former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin.

While Kohli and Rohit's participation in the Vijay Hazare Trophy has created a lot of buzz, Ashwin believes with the expansion of T20 leagues and Test cricket already having its own currency, the space for 50-overs format is gradually shrinking.

"I am not sure about future of ODI after 2027 World Cup. I am a little worried about it. Of course, I am following Vijay Hazare Trophy but the manner in which I followed SMAT, I am finding slightly difficult



R Ashwin

to follow," Ashwin said on his Hindi YouTube channel 'Ash Ki Baat'.

"Also, we need to know what audience wants to watch. I feel Test cricket still has space but ODI cricket, I truly feel (it) doesn't have the space," Ashwin, India's most astute cricket pundit currently, was categorical in his assessment.

India's second highest wicket-taker across formats with 765 scalps, Ashwin voiced his

concern over the future of the format once Kohli and Rohit, with a combined total of 86 ODI tons, walk away.

Changing template

Ashwin spoke about how 50-over was once an "amazing format" that produced a player like Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who knew how to control innings.

"One-day cricket, once upon a time, was an amazing format because it gave a player like MS Dhoni who (would) take singles for 10-15 overs before he went berserk at the end.

"You don't have players like that (Dhoni) anymore and there isn't any requirement to play like that, as you are playing with two new balls and five fielders inside circle," said Ashwin, terming modern ODIs as played in two gears.